

Bridging Boundaries:  
India's Neighborhood Policy  
Amidst Internal and External  
Challenges - A Future Perspective

Dr. Sonam Singh

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Address-Type 4, residence PSSCIVE NCERT regional college,  
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**Dr. Sonam Singh**

**Assistant Professor, Security/Defence science and Military Science  
DHSE PSSCIVE, NCERT, Bhopal**



## Forwarding later

India, with its vast and diverse landscape, rich cultural heritage, and burgeoning economic prowess, stands as a pivotal player on the global stage. Yet, its journey is fraught with intricate security challenges that span from internal socio-political dynamics to external threats from neighboring countries and beyond.

The spectrum of Indian national security issues encompasses territorial disputes, terrorism, insurgency, cyber threats, and the impact of regional and global geopolitical shifts. This book aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of these multifaceted security concerns, exploring the historical context, current state, and future implications for India's national security architecture. The present book “Bridging Boundaries: India’s Neighborhood Policy Amidst Internal and External Challenges - A Future Perspective” delves into the heart of India's security dilemmas. The 13 chapters of the book has covered a wide spectrum of the security challenges to India, which include India’s approach towards Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan, the insurgency in the North-East, and the Maoist movements in central India, Blue water economy etc. Additionally, the strategic intricacies of India's relationships with neighboring Pakistan and China has also been scrutinized, alongside the challenges posed by global terrorism and the evolving nature of futuristic warfare.

This book also seeks to address the internal dimensions of national security, including economic stability, social cohesion, and the role of political institutions in safeguarding the nation. Through a blend of scholarly research, expert analysis, and case studies, this book endeavors to provide readers with a nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding India's national security. It aims to foster a deeper appreciation of the strategies employed by the Indian government and security agencies to navigate these challenges, while also offering insights into potential policy measures and strategic initiatives that could enhance India's security posture in an increasingly interconnected and volatile world.

In a rapidly changing global environment, understanding the intricacies of India's national security is not just an academic exercise but a critical imperative for policymakers, scholars, and citizens alike. This book is a step towards unraveling these complexities and contributing to the discourse on building a secure and resilient India.

Dr. Prashant Agarwal  
Professor  
Department of Defence & Strategic Studies  
University of Allahabad



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## Introduction:

In the intricate geopolitical quilt of the Indian subcontinent, the threads of history, culture, and diplomacy weave together to form a rich narrative of relationships between India and its neighboring countries. "Bridging Boundaries: India's Neighborhood Policy Amidst Internal and External Challenges - A Future Perspective" delves into the complexities of India's neighbourhood policy, exploring the intricacies of its individual relationships with neighboring nations, dissecting their shared challenges, and envisioning the prospects that lie ahead.

As the second-most populous country in the world, India stands at the crossroads of South Asia, sharing borders with Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Srilanka, and Myanmar. Each of these nations contributes a unique hue to the canvas of India's international relations, with a history shaped by colonial legacies, territorial disputes, cultural affinities, and economic interdependencies. This book serves as a comprehensive guide, navigating the tumultuous waters of India's diplomatic engagements with its neighbors. From the perennially strained ties with Pakistan to the evolving dynamics with China, and from the historical bonds with Nepal and Bhutan to the strategic partnerships with Bangladesh and Myanmar, this exploration unveils the myriad challenges and opportunities that define India's regional interactions.

The narrative unfolds through a lens that combines historical context with contemporary analyses, shedding light on the persistent issues that have shaped the region's political landscape. From territorial disputes and security concerns to economic collaborations and cultural exchanges, "Harmony and Discord" paints a vivid picture of the multifaceted relationships that influence the destinies of nations within close proximity.

Moreover, this book does not merely dwell on challenges; it also presents a forward-looking perspective, envisioning a future where diplomatic efforts, shared economic interests, and cultural ties foster greater understanding and cooperation among the countries of South Asia. By examining the historical trajectories and current trajectories of these relationships, we aim to illuminate the path towards regional stability, prosperity, and harmony.

Join us on a journey through the labyrinth of India's neighbourhood policy, where history meets contemporary geopolitics, and where the threads of diplomacy interlace to create a tapestry that is at once intricate and dynamic. "Harmony and Discord" invites readers to explore the mosaic of India's relationships with its neighbors, seeking to unravel the complexities that define this crucial geopolitical space. The exploration of India's "Neighborhood Policy" unveils a narrative of historical bonds, cultural affinities, and diplomatic challenges within the Indian subcontinent. While centuries of shared civilization have woven a tapestry connecting India with neighboring countries, the intricacies of individual relationships have been marked by complexities, territorial disputes, and diverse identities. As Prime Minister Modi assumed office in 2014, his approach to regional diplomacy surprised skeptics, initiating a "Neighborhood First" policy that sought to prioritize relations with neighboring nations.

The challenges faced by India in managing its diverse relationships, particularly with Pakistan and China, are examined against the backdrop of Kautilya's ancient Mandala Theory, emphasizing the inherent complexities of state interactions. From addressing the historical trust deficit to promoting regional cooperation, PM Modi's diplomatic efforts unfold as a significant facet of India's foreign policy. The book scrutinizes key relationships, such as the deepening ties with Bhutan, marked by strategic support during the Doklam crisis, and the efforts to strengthen bonds with Nepal, navigating through periods of tension. It delves into the intricacies of India's attempts to normalize relations with Pakistan, confronting the complexities of terrorism, ceasefires, and the impact of geopolitical developments.

The narrative extends beyond South Asia, examining India's engagements with Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. The evolving dynamics in Afghanistan, especially with the recent Taliban takeover, pose new challenges and uncertainties for India's regional security. Meanwhile, diplomatic successes in Sri Lanka demonstrate the potential for fostering partnerships that extend beyond historical constraints.

The book also explores the resilient relationship with Bangladesh, acknowledging the positive trajectory in recent years. Bilateral ties with Maldives witness a course correction, reflecting India's regional influence and its commitment to an "India First" policy.

Beyond diplomatic overtures, the narrative highlights India's humanitarian endeavors, such as providing COVID-19 vaccines to neighboring countries, contributing to regional stability and public

health. Initiatives like the South Asian Satellite and the ITEC Programme underscore India's commitment to fostering economic development and growth in the region.

Throughout this comprehensive exploration, Prime Minister Modi's bold, creative, and steadfast approach emerges as a defining factor in shaping India's "Neighborhood First" policy. The book ultimately evaluates the success of this policy, asserting that India's relations with its neighbors have significantly improved under Modi's leadership since 2014.

## Chapter 1

# India's "Neighborhood Policy": Internal Challenges

Dr. Anurag Singh

Assistant Professor, Political Science Department,  
Bundelkhand Degree College, Jhansi

And

Dr. Sonam Singh

Assistant Professor, Security/Defence science and Military Science  
PSSCIVE, NCERT, Bhopal

### **Abstract**

India, with deep-rooted cultural and historical ties to its neighboring countries, has faced challenges in translating shared cultural and historical commonalities into harmonious relations. Despite Prime Minister Modi's proactive diplomatic steps, including the launch of the "Neighborhood First" policy, challenges in relations with neighbors persist, reflecting a global pattern seen in other large countries.

Kautilya's ancient Mandala Theory, dating back to around 300 BCE, posits that a state's neighbor is its natural enemy, and its neighbor's neighbor is its friend. In the SAARC, India holds a dominant position, contributing significantly to various aspects, yet a trust deficit exists among neighbors, perpetuating the perception of India's "Big Brother" attitude. PM Modi's strategic efforts include prioritizing relations with neighbors, as exemplified by the selection of Bhutan for his first visit. The strong and stable India he envisions is one that can assist its neighbors. Over the past seven years, India's relations with Bhutan have witnessed growth, notably during the Doklam crisis in 2017, reinforcing India's commitment to protect its and its neighbors' strategic interests.

India's support during the COVID-19 pandemic, exemplified by vaccine donations and medical supplies to Bhutan, underscores the close ties between the two nations. PM Modi's visits to neighboring countries aim to position them as active partners in India's

development, with a focus on mutual benefits. Challenges in India-Nepal relations, particularly in 2015, were addressed through high-level visits and diplomatic efforts. Despite intermittent tensions, India's commitment to stabilizing ties and providing aid during the pandemic demonstrates the importance of the "Neighborhood First" policy. Efforts to improve relations with Pakistan have been met with challenges, with increased firing and support for terrorist attacks. India's response involves adopting a policy of greater force to deter such actions. Despite Pakistan's obstructionist approach, India continues initiatives for regional cooperation.

In conclusion, PM Modi's bold and strategic approach, combined with active diplomacy, aims to strengthen India's relations with neighboring countries. The success of the "Neighborhood First" policy is evident in the improved ties, demonstrating India's commitment to fostering cooperation and addressing challenges in the region.

## **Introduction**

India has maintained deep-rooted cultural and historical connections with its neighboring countries for centuries. Despite shared ties in culture, language, attire, cuisine, traditions, and faiths, these commonalities have not always translated into harmonious relations between India and its neighbors. On the contrary, some neighboring nations have occasionally emphasized their distinct identities as separate from India, using various factors such as culture and history. When Prime Minister Modi assumed office on May 26, 2014, he faced significant and challenging diplomatic tasks. Initial skepticism about his limited exposure to foreign affairs was dispelled as he took proactive steps, notably by inviting Heads of State/Government from all SAARC countries and the Prime Minister of Mauritius to his swearing-in ceremony. While the presence of all SAARC leaders marked the launch of the "Neighborhood First" policy, it is essential to acknowledge that strained relations between neighboring countries are a common global phenomenon, even evident in large countries like the USA-Canada, USA-Mexico, France-Germany, and others.

Kautilya's Mandala Theory of Inter-State relations, dating back to around 300 BCE, posited that a state's neighbor is its natural enemy, and its neighbor's neighbor is its friend. Although exceptions exist, this theory remains relevant in many cases. In the SAARC, India holds a dominant position, contributing significantly to the total land

area, GDP, wealth, trade, and other key aspects. India shares borders with all SAARC member countries, whether land or maritime, distinguishing it from other members.

Since India's independence, a trust deficit has persisted among its neighbors, who perceive India as adopting a "Big Brother" attitude, particularly toward smaller nations. There is a prevailing sentiment that India does not invest sufficient time and attention in addressing issues or enhancing relations with its neighbors, fostering suspicions even regarding projects beneficial to smaller countries. In an effort to build confidence and trust, PM Modi prioritized relations with neighbors in the formulation and execution of the government's foreign policy. His choice of Bhutan for his first official visit aimed to strengthen the "special relationship" in the face of China's attempts to establish diplomatic ties with Bhutan. During his address to the Bhutanese Parliament in June 2014, PM Modi emphasized the symbiotic nature of India's strength benefiting Bhutan and other SAARC nations.

The necessity of a strong and stable India is emphasized by the statement, "India needs to be strong so that we can assist our neighbors." Over the past seven years under the first Modi government, India's relations with Bhutan have witnessed significant growth. India's unwavering support for Bhutan's territorial integrity was evident during the Doklam crisis in 2017, reinforcing India's commitment to protect its strategic interests and those of its neighbors against unwarranted aggression from China.

Bhutan, being the first country to receive a gratis consignment of 1.5 lakh doses of 'Made in India' COVID-19 vaccines, exemplifies the close ties between the two nations. Bhutan's Prime Minister, Dr. Lotay Tshering, expressed gratitude, acknowledging India as a 'trusted friend' that has supported Bhutan through the decades. Throughout the pandemic, India provided ten consignments of medical supplies, including essential medicines, portable X-Ray machines, and medical equipment to Bhutan. Additionally, India organized training programs for immunization managers, cold chain officers, communication officers, and data managers from Bhutan at both national and provincial levels.

Prime Minister Modi's visits to neighboring countries aim to position them as active partners and stakeholders in India's development. His visit to Nepal in August 2014, the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 17 years, aimed to dispel the perception of neglect.

During this visit, PM Modi announced India's commitment to help Nepal become a developed country, utilizing its resources for hydro-electric power generation and purchasing it at market prices to meet India's growing energy demands. Despite positive developments, India-Nepal relations faced challenges in 2015 when protests erupted against the newly adopted constitution. The blockade of vehicular movement from India into Nepal further strained relations. Subsequent issues, such as new maps drawn up in May 2020 and amendments to the Nepalese Constitution, escalated tensions. Efforts by PM Oli to use hyper-nationalism to deflect internal challenges ultimately led to his resignation in July 2021.

India's attempts to stabilize bilateral ties included high-level visits by Foreign Secretary, the Army Chief, and other officials. Sher Bahadur Deuba's assumption of power after Oli's resignation aimed to provide stability and enhance bilateral ties. In line with its Neighborhood First Policy, India supplied 1 million doses of the Covishield vaccine to Nepal on January 21, 2021, with further supplies temporarily halted due to the second wave in India but set to resume shortly due to increased production. PM Modi's efforts to enhance relations with Pakistan were evident not just in words but also in actions when he invited Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif to his inaugural swearing-in ceremony. Despite this positive start, PM Modi did not hesitate to call off Foreign Secretary-level talks in August 2014 due to the Pakistan High Commissioner's meeting with Kashmiri separatists against India's advice. Addressing the UN General Assembly in September 2014, PM Modi expressed India's desire for a peaceful environment, emphasizing a willingness to engage in a serious bilateral dialogue with Pakistan free from the shadow of terrorism.

However, India's attempts to improve relations were met with increased firing and shelling from across its borders and continued support for terrorist attacks on Indian soil by Pakistan. India responded by adopting a policy of responding to all attacks with even greater force, aiming to make Pakistan feel the consequences of its actions. Despite Pakistan's obstructionist approach to regional cooperation, India continued initiatives to enhance cooperation in sub-regional groups like BBIN and BIMSTEC.

PM Modi pursued normalization with Pakistan through bilateral dialogues on terrorism, particularly in their informal meeting in Ufa, Russia, in July 2015. Subsequent initiatives, including PM Modi's visit to Sharif's home in Lahore in December 2015, were met with

terror attacks in Pathankot (January 2016) and Uri (September 2016). This led to a breaking point, and PM Modi declared that talks and terror could not coexist, severing all dialogue with Pakistan. The surgical strike in September 2016 and the Balakot air strike in response to the Pulwama attack in February 2019 demonstrated India's firm stance against terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

Recent developments in Afghanistan, with the Taliban assuming power in August 2021, have increased the vulnerability of the Line of Control (LOC) and India-Pakistan border. A ceasefire has been in place since February 2021, but rising tensions have heightened concerns about potential terrorist actions from across the border. There is a growing demand for decisive action against Pakistan in response to its actions, particularly the recent killings and attacks on individuals in Kashmir. It's crucial to acknowledge that in Pakistan, policies related to India, the USA, Afghanistan, and nuclear issues are largely under the control of the Pakistan Army. The civilian government's influence is limited, and any measures to improve relations with India might impact the military's funding and resources. Consequently, India may need to contend with periodic shelling and incursions from across the border, remaining prepared to respond decisively to any treacherous actions, similar to the Uri and Pulwama attacks.

PM Modi's successful "Samudra Yatra" in March 2015, which included a visit to Sri Lanka, marked the first bilateral visit by an Indian PM in 28 years. The visit emphasized India's interest in Sri Lanka's integrity, sovereignty, stability, security, and prosperity. Subsequent visits in 2017 and 2019 provided a fresh impetus to bilateral engagement. The election of Gotabaya Rajapaksa as President in 2019 presented both a challenge and an opportunity. India chose to focus on the opportunity, dispatching External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to Colombo immediately after President Rajapaksa's swearing-in. This proactive approach set the stage for significant growth in bilateral ties over the last two years, with senior Sri Lankan officials making India their first port of call after elections. President Rajapaksa has given assurance to India that Sri Lanka will not permit its territory to be utilized for any activities that could jeopardize India's security. Recent visits by the Indian Foreign Secretary and the Indian Army Chief have further solidified ties and broadened understanding between the two nations. The inauguration of the Kushinagar International airport by PM Modi on October 20,



2021, where a plane carrying Sri Lankan monks and devotees was the first to land, has conveyed a powerful message of friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

The then Afghan President, Ashraf Ghani, visited India from April 27 to 29, 2015, providing an opportunity for comprehensive face-to-face dialogue on the future trajectory of the partnership between the two nations. Despite concerns about Ghani's proximity to Pakistan and China, PM Modi utilized the visit to underscore India's strategic interest in a stable, secure, democratic, secular, and prosperous Afghanistan. Over the past seven years, India and Afghanistan have significantly expanded cooperation in various development sectors, with India executing over 500 high-impact community development projects across all 34 provinces. The recent Taliban takeover in Kabul has introduced uncertainty and anxiety, leading to global concerns about the potential use of Afghan territory for launching terror attacks. India has been actively participating in international fora to pressure the Taliban to protect human rights, particularly those of minorities and women, and prevent the use of Afghan territory for terrorism. Simultaneously, India has initiated a dialogue with the Taliban to communicate its interests and concerns, ensuring their safeguarding.

India has also expressed readiness to provide humanitarian aid, such as food, medicines, and emergency items, to avert the impending human catastrophe in Afghanistan. Diplomatic efforts involve active engagement with regional and global partners, including Russia, Iran, Central Asian countries, Qatar, Europe, USA, and others, to establish a unified international policy in dealing with the Taliban. India is also collaborating with Iran, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan to enhance connectivity through the Chabahar port.

Presently, India's relations with Bangladesh are at their most friendly and fruitful since 1975. Cooperation has strengthened significantly, with mutual support in dealing with insurgency and India providing financial aid for economic and infrastructure development. PM Modi's emphasis on relations is evident in the Land Boundary Agreement, and the continuous interaction with the Sheikh Hasina Government has further deepened ties. Similar positive developments have occurred with Maldives, where a change in leadership resulted in improved relations and support from India.

India's generous supply of vaccines to neighboring countries, excluding Pakistan, has been well-received, contributing to stronger

ties. Initiatives like the South Asian Satellite and the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme have further promoted economic development and growth among India's neighbors. PM Modi's clear-headed approach and effective communication skills have played a crucial role in building stronger relations with neighboring countries, Southeast Asia, and strategic partners globally, aligning with India's national interests and concerns. The success of India's "Neighbourhood First" policy is evident in significantly improved relations with most neighboring countries since PM Modi assumed office in 2014.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, India's enduring cultural and historical ties with its neighboring countries have not always translated into seamless diplomatic relations. Prime Minister Modi, assuming office in 2014, faced substantial diplomatic challenges exacerbated by the perception of India's "Big Brother" attitude and a persisting trust deficit among its neighbors. The launch of the "Neighborhood First" policy aimed to overcome these challenges, acknowledging strained relations as a common global phenomenon.

The ancient Mandala Theory of Inter-State relations, propounded by Kautilya, reflected the complex dynamics of India's relations within the SAARC. Holding a dominant position in the region, India's efforts to address the trust deficit involved proactive diplomacy, prioritizing relationships, and fostering mutual growth. The strategic choice of Bhutan for Modi's first official visit underscored the commitment to strengthen the "special relationship" amidst external pressures. The Doklam crisis in 2017 demonstrated India's unwavering support for Bhutan's territorial integrity, solidifying India's commitment to safeguard strategic interests in the face of external threats.

The COVID-19 pandemic showcased the depth of India's relations with Bhutan, exemplified by vaccine donations, medical supplies, and training programs. Similarly, efforts in Nepal, despite challenges, emphasized mutual cooperation and support during times of crisis. In the context of Pakistan, Modi's proactive approach, symbolized by the invitation to Nawaz Sharif, faced setbacks with increased border tensions and continued support for terrorist activities. India's response, marked by a policy of measured force, underscored a commitment to protect its citizens and deter hostile actions. Despite challenges, India persisted in sub-regional initiatives like BBIN and BIMSTEC, signaling a commitment to regional cooperation beyond

obstacles posed by specific nations. In essence, Prime Minister Modi's diplomatic endeavors have aimed at fostering a peaceful environment and cooperative engagement, navigating complex geopolitical realities to promote mutual development and stability in the neighborhood.

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## Chapter 2

### India-Bangladesh Relations

Dr. kulveer Singh Chauhan

Assistant Professor (Political Science)

Dept. of DESSH, Regional Institute of Education, NCERT,  
Shaymala Hills, Bhopal

#### **Abstract**

The India-Bangladesh relationship is deeply rooted in shared history, common heritage, and geographical proximity. The tragic events surrounding the Partition of India in 1947 led to the creation of East Pakistan, later Bangladesh, with India playing a significant role in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War. This war marked a turning point in South Asian dynamics and solidified the friendship between the two nations.

This chapter delves into the historical context of the region, exploring the roots of Bangladesh in ancient civilizations and the impact of various empires. It highlights the political and social developments that culminated in the Bangladesh Liberation War, discussing the role of the Mukti Bahini, India's support, and the eventual victory leading to the creation of Bangladesh. The cultural and social bonds between India and Bangladesh are explored, emphasizing the rich literary heritage, shared language, and historical influences. The paper also examines contemporary cultural exchanges, including events commemorating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties and the participation of a Bangladesh Armed Forces contingent in India's Republic Day parade.

Additionally, the study delves into people-to-people connectivity initiatives, such as the restoration of rail links, increased frequency of passenger trains, and the inauguration of the Feni Bridge (Maitree Setu). These measures aim to enhance bilateral ties, fostering economic and social cooperation. In conclusion, the multifaceted relationship between India and Bangladesh is a testament to the enduring ties forged through historical events, cultural affinities, and collaborative efforts for mutual development.

#### **Introduction:**

India and Bangladesh share a unique bond, rooted in their common heritage, intertwined history, and shared experiences, including the tragic aftermath of the Partition of India in 1947, marked by significant losses and widespread family separations. These historical connections have paved the way for a multifaceted and continually evolving bilateral relationship between the two nations. Geographical proximity further enhances the potential for strengthened connectivity and economic collaboration.

A pivotal moment in their shared history unfolded 50 years ago during the Bangladesh War of Liberation in 1971 when India played a significant role in the transformation of East Pakistan into the independent nation of Bangladesh. This historic event reshaped the dynamics of South Asia. India, standing in solidarity with Bangladesh, was among the first countries, alongside Bhutan, to recognize Bangladesh as a sovereign state on December 6, 1971. The border between India and Bangladesh, stretching 4,096.7 kilometers, stands as the fifth longest in the contemporary world. Recognizing the strategic importance of Bangladesh, India established a 25-year 'Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation' after the birth of Bangladesh. In the broader context, Bangladesh is a key pillar of India's 'Neighbourhood First Policy,' emphasizing the significance of fostering strong ties with immediate neighbors.

### **History:**

Historically, the region that now constitutes Bangladesh was an integral part of the Bengal region of India, ruled by various empires from the Maurya (321–184 BCE) to the Mughal (1526–1858 CE) dynasties. During the British Raj in India (1858–1947), Bangladesh was included within its administrative boundaries. The partition of India in 1947 led to the creation of East Bengal as a Pakistani province, later renamed East Pakistan. Geographically isolated from the other provinces by Indian territory, it remained part of Pakistan until 1971. The year 1971 marked a watershed moment when Bangladesh emerged as an independent country following a struggle for liberation. Dhaka became the capital of this newly established nation.

### **Bangladesh Liberation War:**

The struggle for Bengali rights began soon after Pakistan gained independence, consisting of two non-contiguous territories known as West Pakistan (present-day Pakistan) and East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh). Early issues included the refusal to accept Bengali as a

state language, economic disparities, West Pakistani hegemony, martial laws, and a derogatory attitude towards Bengali culture. Tensions escalated after the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won a significant victory in Pakistan's elections on December 7, 1970. Facing opposition from General Agha Mohammed Yahya Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of the Pakistan People's Party, the Awami League's efforts to form the government were thwarted. In response, the Pakistani army was deployed to East Pakistan on March 25, 1971, launching Operation Searchlight, a brutal crackdown that resulted in widespread genocide. Fleeing violence, many sought refuge in Indian states.

India, grappling with a massive influx of refugees, took unilateral action to address the humanitarian crisis. Despite limited aid from other countries, India maintained a non-refoulement policy towards refugees. As political events unfolded, the Mukti Bahini (freedom fighters) gained strength, and with Indian support, they resisted the Pakistani military. The conflict intensified, leading to a full-scale invasion by India, officially commencing the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971.

The Indian Army, superior in numbers and equipment, executed a three-pronged pincer movement on Dhaka, with significant contributions from the Mukti Bahini. The conflict saw guerrilla-style attacks, defections from the Pakistani army, and a joint effort by the Indian military, Mukti Bahini, and local Bengalis. Pakistan's attempt to nullify the Indian attack with pre-emptive air strikes failed, leading to a full-scale invasion by India. As the Indian forces closed in on Dhaka, Pakistan surrendered on December 16, 1971, marking the liberation of Bangladesh. The Shimla Agreement in 1972 between India and Pakistan ensured international recognition for Bangladesh in exchange for the return of Pakistani prisoners of war.

### **India-Bangladesh Cultural and Social Relations:**

Bangladesh, existing as an independent country since the late 20th century, has a national character rooted in ancient history within the broader South Asian context. Bengal's historical significance includes governance by the Mauryan and Gupta Empires, promoting Buddhism and Jainism and contributing to advancements in various fields. During classical antiquity, Bengal saw the rise of the Pala Empire in the 9th century, fostering Mahayana Buddhism and cultural achievements. Arab traders introduced Islam to Bengal in the 9th century, leading to a synthesis of pre-Islamic and Islamic culture.

Reflecting this rich history, Bangladesh's culture encompasses both old and new elements. Bengali language and literature share a heritage with West Bengal in India, with significant literary contributions from poets like Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam. Folk literature, traditional art forms, and a vibrant cultural identity contribute to the unique character of Bangladesh.

### **Cultural Exchanges:**

The Republic Day celebration on January 26, 2021, marked a significant moment in India-Bangladesh relations as both nations commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the Liberation War and the establishment of diplomatic ties. A historic highlight was the participation of a contingent from the Bangladesh Armed Forces, comprising 122 members from its tri-services, in the Indian Republic Day parade—a first-time occurrence. In a virtual summit on December 17, 2020, both countries agreed to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of their diplomatic relations. While Bangladesh observes the year of Mujib (Mujib Borsho: March 17, 2020, to March 16, 2021), India pays tribute to the martyrs of both nations who sacrificed their lives in the war leading to the birth of Bangladesh. Joint efforts are underway to organize various activities globally to commemorate these significant events in India and Bangladesh.

### **The Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC):**

The Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC), a Cultural Centre of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations in Bangladesh, regularly hosts programs encompassing a diverse range of cultural activities such as Yoga, Hindustani Classical Music, Manipuri Dance, Kathak, and Painting.

### **Akash Vani Maitree:**

Akash Vani Maitree, a radio channel, was established to provide a platform for blending content from both India and Bangladesh, aiming to preserve Bengali culture

### **Enhancing People-to-People Connectivity:**

Both governments are actively undertaking initiatives to reinstate the rail links and various connectivity routes that existed prior to 1965 between India and Bangladesh. A significant milestone was achieved on December 17, 2020, when the two Prime Ministers jointly inaugurated the newly restored railway link between Chilahati (Bangladesh) and Haldibari (India). To foster people-to-people contacts, the frequency of two passenger trains, namely Maitree Express and Bandhan Express, was increased from 4 to 5 days a week

and from one to two days a week, respectively, starting from February 2020. Both nations also implemented side-door container and parcel trains to ensure uninterrupted supply chains during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

As a gesture of collaboration, the Government of India handed over 10 broad gauge diesel locomotives to Bangladesh Railways as part of grant assistance in a virtual event attended by External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar, Railways Minister Piyush Goyal, and their Bangladeshi Counterparts Dr. A K Abdul Momen and Md Nurul Islam Sujon on July 27, 2020. During Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to New Delhi in October 2019, both governments decided to launch the Dhaka-Siliguri-Gangtok-Dhaka and Dhaka-Siliguri-Darjeeling-Dhaka bus services to enhance people-to-people contacts. The trial run of Dhaka-Siliguri-Gangtok-Dhaka was conducted in December 2019. The Feni Bridge (Maitree Setu), connecting LCS Subroom (Tripura) and LCS Ramgarh (Bangladesh), was jointly inaugurated on a virtual platform by both Prime Ministers on March 9, 2021.

### **Capacity Building and Human Resource Development:**

Human resource development is a pivotal aspect of India's development cooperation efforts in Bangladesh, with ongoing training programs and scholarships. Since 2019, the Government of India has been training 1800 Bangladesh Civil Service officials at the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) in Mussoorie. Bangladeshi police officials receive training at various premier institutes in India on modern policing and new investigative techniques of the information age. Additionally, since 2017, 1500 Bangladeshi judicial officials have undergone training at the National Judicial Academy in Bhopal and various State Judicial Academies in India. Bangladesh is an important ITEC partner country, with around 800 participants annually availing ITEC training courses. Furthermore, ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations) awards 200 scholarships every year to students from Bangladesh pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate, and MPhil/PhD courses in Indian educational institutes, including the IITs and NIITs.

### **Collaborative Efforts in Addressing the COVID-19 Challenge:**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina actively participated in a video conference with SAARC leaders on March 15, 2020, following an invitation from Prime Minister Modi. The objective was to collectively assess the current pandemic situation, share best



practices, and devise cooperative measures to minimize and mitigate the spread of the disease. In a bilateral context, the Government of India demonstrated its commitment by providing three tranches of medical assistance to Bangladesh in March-April 2020. This included 30,000 surgical masks, 15,000 head covers, 50,000 surgical latex gloves, 100,000 Hydroxychloroquine medicine tablets, and RT-PCR test kits capable of conducting 30,000 tests. Additionally, India conducted various online training modules to equip Bangladeshi health professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills for the treatment and care of COVID-19 patients.

In a further display of solidarity, the Government of India gifted 2 million Covishield (Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines) to Bangladesh in January 2021 to bolster its efforts against the pandemic. A trilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Government of Bangladesh, BEXIMCO Pharmaceuticals Limited, and the Serum Institute of India (SII) to procure 3 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccine from the SII, marking a strategic collaboration in the ongoing battle against the pandemic

### **Economic Collaboration Between India and Bangladesh:**

Bangladesh stands as India's largest trade partner in South Asia, reciprocated by India being the second-largest trade partner for Bangladesh. Over the past decade, bilateral trade has experienced robust growth, witnessing a threefold increase in Bangladesh's exports, surpassing \$1 billion in 2018-19. In the fiscal year 2019-20, India exported goods worth \$8.2 billion to Bangladesh, while imports amounted to \$1.26 billion. Various institutional mechanisms, such as Secretary-level meetings of Commerce and shipping ministries, discussions on LCS/ICP infrastructure, and the establishment of the Indian Economic Zone, have been instrumental in fostering bilateral trade. To further enhance cooperation, the India-Bangladesh CEO's Forum was inaugurated in December 2020, aiming to provide policy-level insights across trade and investment domains and facilitate exchanges within the business communities of both nations. Additionally, the inaugural meeting of the India-Bangladesh Textile Industry Forum in February 2020 aimed at strengthening linkages and collaboration in the textile sector.

The power sector has emerged as a cornerstone of India-Bangladesh relations, with Bangladesh currently importing 1160 MW of power from India. The Joint Working Group (JWG)/Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on power serves as an institutional framework to

bolster bilateral cooperation in cross-border electricity trade. Recent landmark developments, including the resolution of the maritime boundary dispute in 2014, the ratification of the Land Boundary Agreement, and the successful exchange of enclaves in 2015, have significantly shaped the economic ties between India and Bangladesh. Cooperation extends to diverse sectors, spanning space, information technology, shipping, electronics, energy, tourism, and the civil nuclear program, marked by the signing of 90 memorandums of understanding (MoUs).

Bangladesh has become India's prominent development partner, receiving three Lines of Credit (LOC) totaling US\$ 8 billion over the last eight years. These funds support infrastructure development in various sectors, including roads, railways, shipping, and ports. Alongside LOCs, the Government of India extends grant assistance for various infrastructure projects in Bangladesh, such as the Akhaura-Agartala rail link, inland waterway dredging, and the construction of the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline. The potential for stronger economic ties not only offers both nations the opportunity to integrate into regional and global value chains but also enhances their manufacturing sectors and investment environments. Regional organizations like BIMSTEC, SAARC, and BBIN could play pivotal roles in catalyzing regional prosperity and fostering greater collaboration in environmental and service-provision domains. **Unlocking the Blue Economy Potential:**

The 2018 Declaration at the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit marked a significant step towards embracing cooperation in the Blue Economy (BE) sector. This move, supported by the establishment of an inter-governmental expert group, underscores the integral role of the Bay of Bengal's BE in fortifying the economic partnership between India and Bangladesh. Bangladesh, equipped with a well-crafted BE policy, has laid out a comprehensive framework for sustainable development and cross-border collaboration in areas such as fisheries, aquaculture, biotechnology, and submarine mining. Organizations like BIMSTEC play a pivotal role by facilitating dialogue and creating avenues for cross-border cooperation, fostering economic interactions, and contributing to the formation of more integrated regions capable of navigating global transformations. India's Act East Policy, particularly within the framework of BIMSTEC, holds the potential to reshape international partnerships. Collaboration between India

and Bangladesh can spearhead a proactive form of regionalism, especially by enhancing integrated sea routes.

Despite BIMSTEC's relative understated significance compared to other regional organizations, it holds immense promise due to the strategic locations of its member countries in the Bay of Bengal region, featuring numerous ports and potential sea-trade routes. BIMSTEC stands poised to become a key driver of regional economic growth, elevating the region's role in the global trade order. Strengthening connectivity between India and Bangladesh will inject vitality into the BIMSTEC region, promoting integration among member nations for the seamless flow of goods and services.

The BBIN initiative aims to establish functional transport corridors, transforming them into economic corridors that will bolster existing value chains and create new ones. The significant potential for overseas trade through enhanced sea-route connectivity presents an opportunity for India and Bangladesh to play pivotal roles in the region, tapping into the vast economic possibilities of the Bay of Bengal. The recent enhancement and introduction of the Kolkata-Chattogram (Chittagong) sea route via the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route further promote BE cooperation. The maiden consignment flagged off from Kolkata Port to Agartala and Assam through the Chittagong Sea Port in July 2020 signifies a new chapter in trade connectivity between the Bay of Bengal region and Northeast India. Streamlining overseas shipments, establishing alternative trade corridors, and advancing multi-modal connectivity are imperative steps to overcome vulnerabilities induced by the pandemic.

### **Strategic Dimensions of India-Bangladesh Relations:**

The historical ties between India and Bangladesh, rooted in a common heritage and shared history, have evolved into a multifaceted and ever-expanding bilateral relationship over the past five decades. India played a pivotal role in recognizing Bangladesh as a sovereign state on December 6, 1971, marking a significant moment in South Asian geopolitics. The geographical proximity, coupled with a shared border of 4,096.7 kilometers – the fifth longest in the world – presents an opportunity for both nations to strengthen connectivity and foster economic cooperation.

The complex journey of India-Bangladesh relations witnessed challenges, notably following the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, which temporarily strained the ties between Dhaka and New Delhi. The subsequent era of military rule

in Bangladesh further impacted the relationship, creating diplomatic hurdles. However, the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh in the 1990s marked a turning point, fostering a renewed era of cooperation. The last decade, particularly under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has seen significant strides in India-Bangladesh ties. The Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) stands out as a milestone, symbolizing the commitment to resolving longstanding border disputes. The 2015 LBA, building upon the 2011 Protocol, facilitated the exchange of enclaves and adverse possessions, addressing undemarcated land boundaries in key sectors like Daikhata-56, Muhuri River–Belonia, and Lathitila–Dumabari. This historic agreement resulted in the transfer of territories, with Bangladesh gaining more than India in the land swap.

The bilateral relationship has seen a positive trajectory, marked by agreements and mutual understanding. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's leadership has played a pivotal role in deepening cooperation on various fronts. The successful resolution of complex territorial issues reflects the commitment of both nations to stability and regional security. As India and Bangladesh navigate common challenges and capitalize on shared opportunities, their strategic partnership continues to evolve, promising a future characterized by enhanced cooperation and mutual prosperity.

### **Bangladesh's Geopolitical Significance for India:**

To comprehend Bangladesh's role in India's strategic landscape, certain key aspects merit consideration. Geographically, Bangladesh serves as a strategic buffer between mainland India and the northeastern states, all of which are landlocked and have a more direct route to the sea through Bangladesh. Presently, these states utilize the Kolkata port for both domestic and imported cargo. The navigable rivers in India's Northeast, connecting ports in West Bengal or Orissa, traverse Bangladesh.

The Siliguri Corridor, situated near the Chinese border and within striking distance of Bangladesh, is the sole entry and exit point for India's northeastern region, making it a highly sensitive 'choke point.' Many northeastern states, including Assam, Tripura, and Nagaland, face persistent insurgencies, and full integration with the Indian Union is yet to be achieved. Arunachal Pradesh, still disputed between China and India, lies in close proximity to Bangladesh. Additionally, Bangladesh provides convenient land access to Southeast Asian countries, aligning with India's Look East Policy.

### **India-Bangladesh Relationship Challenges:**

Despite the overall positive trajectory of India-Bangladesh relations, certain critical factors pose challenges to the bilateral relationship. The Farakka Barrage dispute arises from India's construction and operation of the barrage, leading to concerns about the lean season flow of the Ganga waters. The Farakka Barrage was intended to enhance water depth at the Kolkata port, but disputes over lean season flow sharing have persisted since irrigation withdrawals increased in Bangladesh. The Teesta River dispute further complicates matters, with disagreements over water flow allocations, particularly due to objections from the Chief Minister of West Bengal.

The construction of the Tipaimukh Dam, a proposed hydel power project on the Barak River in Manipur, has drawn objections from Bangladesh. Concerns center around potential adverse ecological effects in Bangladesh's eastern Sylhet district. Despite India's assurances that the dam would not be constructed against Bangladesh's objections, the controversy remains unresolved. Both countries have established a joint study group to assess the issues raised by Bangladesh.

Addressing these water-related disputes and concerns is crucial for fostering a stable and cooperative relationship between India and Bangladesh, given the shared geographical and geopolitical intricacies.

### **Illegal Migration:**

The persistent issue of illegal migration has been a longstanding source of contention between India and Bangladesh. Since the 1971 war that led to the creation of Bangladesh, a significant number of Bangladeshi immigrants, the majority of whom are illegal, have entered India. Despite attempts by the Indian government to deport some of these immigrants, the sheer volume and the porous border between the two countries have rendered such efforts practically impossible. Estimating the exact number of illegal immigrants in India remains challenging, especially considering the massive influx during the civil war in East Pakistan (former Bangladesh) in 1971 when at least 10 million Bangladeshis entered West Bengal alone.

Illegal migration poses threats to India's internal security, particularly in the eastern and northeastern regions. The impact extends to communal, political, social, and economic tensions in various areas, affecting states such as West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Bihar, and Tripura, with migrants also spreading to distant states like

Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Delhi. Although the precise figure is uncertain, estimates suggest that there are approximately 15-20 million illegal Bangladeshi migrants in India. India's efforts to address the migration issue have faced challenges. The Illegal Migrants Determination by Tribunal (IMDT), established in 1985 to detect foreigners, particularly in Assam, proved ineffective and was annulled by the Supreme Court of India in 2005. Foreigners Tribunals have since replaced IMDT for the detection of foreigners in Assam. The absence of reliable data on the number of Bangladeshi migrants has hindered dialogue with Bangladesh. The National Registration of Citizens (NRC) conducted in Assam aimed to identify illegal migrants but faced controversy, excluding around two million people, raising concerns about the exclusion of genuine Indian citizens.

### **Territorial Waters:**

Serious differences between India and Bangladesh emerged over the demarcation of territorial waters. The ownership dispute over South Talpatty in Bangladesh and New Moore/Purbasha in India, discovered in 1975, has persisted. The two countries initially disagreed on resolving the issue through a joint Indo-Bangladesh team but eventually engaged in negotiations after India stationed naval troops on the island in 1981. Despite ongoing negotiations, the sovereignty over the disputed island remains undecided, and recent reports suggest Bangladesh views India with suspicion regarding its activities in the disputed area.

### **Drug Trafficking:**

Bangladesh has increasingly become a transit point for drug traffickers dispatching heroin and opium from Burma and other Golden Triangle countries to various destinations. The Department of Narcotics Control in Bangladesh has faced scrutiny and criticism due to its involvement. Bangladesh has become a primary transit route for trafficking heroin to Europe from Southeast Asia, with common smuggling methods including couriers from Pakistan, commercial vehicles and trains from India, and sea routes through the Bay of Bengal or overland routes by truck or public transport from Burma.

### **Anti-Terrorism Collaboration:**

The Ministry of Defence in India has expressed a keen interest in securing robust cooperation from Bangladesh in combating terrorism and insurgent groups with anti-India agendas operating from its territory. Both countries' armed forces have previously demonstrated

their effectiveness by jointly addressing challenges, such as dealing with ULFA cadres, exemplified by the extradition of Arabinda Rajkova to Indian security agencies.

Recognizing the need for joint efforts against terrorism, Bangladesh has acknowledged the presence of terror outfits based in Pakistan forming strong connections with militants in Bangladesh. This is particularly concerning due to Bangladesh's close proximity to India and its porous border, which can be exploited for carrying out attacks in India. India has identified various security-related concerns with respect to Bangladesh, including sanctuaries for Indian ethnic terrorist organizations like ULFA, activities of trans-border Islamic terrorist groups such as MULTA, ILAA, and PULF, and the involvement of pro-Al Qaeda organizations of Pakistani origin like LeT, HuJI, and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM). Other issues include gun running into India's northeast through Bangladesh, illegal migration into Assam and West Bengal, the flow of funds from Wahabi charity organizations in Saudi Arabia to fundamentalist elements in the Bangladesh-India region, and money laundering through India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh regions.

**China in India-Bangladesh relations**  
The role of China in India-Bangladesh relations is a subject of scrutiny. While Bangladesh asserts its commitment to an independent foreign policy and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina advocates maintaining equidistant ties with both China and India, there is skepticism among Indian analysts regarding China's involvement in Bangladesh. Despite this, Bangladesh has declared a strategic partnership with China and joined the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), an economic initiative with strategic implications, in contrast to India's decision to refrain from participating in the BRI.

Bangladesh emphasizes that its relationship with China is primarily economic and not motivated by a desire to counterbalance any specific country. The country asserts its openness to forging friendships with nations contributing to its economic development. Notably, during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Bangladesh in 2016, China pledged significant financial assistance amounting to US\$ 28 billion. Bangladesh maintains that its engagement with China is economically driven and expresses confidence in negotiating favorable terms while remaining unfazed by concerns of a perceived Chinese debt trap.

Despite Bangladesh's reassurances, India maintains a vigilant stance on Chinese involvement in Bangladesh, influenced by past instances

where China allegedly used Bangladesh's territory to support insurgent groups in India's Northeast region. The apprehensions are fueled by historical instances, such as ULFA leader Paresh Baruah reportedly seeking refuge in China after fleeing from Bangladesh

**Conclusion:**

India has a stake in Bangladesh not only for the security of its eastern borders but also for other strategic advantages. Therefore, it cannot afford to let go of the recently achieved opportunity to break away from the past trajectory and establish new contours of engagement with Bangladesh. In many ways, this is a rare opportunity for both the countries to talk with each other and resolve differences.

India needs to look at more ways to deepen its ties with Bangladesh especially keeping in mind, the shifting nature of geopolitics and geoeconomics in South Asia. India needs to find a fine balance in respecting Bangladesh's economic growth while maintaining its economic progress. India and Bangladesh have more or less agreed on most issues and this stability must be maintained. Important issues like the Teesta River issue and the Rohingya issue needs to be dealt with carefully by India and India must make sure it doesn't offend Bangladesh on these issues. Further, there is a need to work on a better way to deal with the deportation of the illegal migrants. Illegal trading, trafficking and cattle smuggling must also be watched especially with respect to narcotics. This can be curbed by joint patrol systems in the Northeast India region. China factor is also a major concern for India and so, Bangladesh must also understand India's concerns and not fall for China's debt trap policy like Sri Lanka. Bangladesh must maintain itself as a democracy and not fall into military rule in order to have peace, security and stability in the region of South Asia. India and Bangladesh must continue to work in the regional organisations like SAARC, BIMSTEC and BBIN and help each other in COVID-19 related matters. Thereby, India and Bangladesh need to work on a multifaceted bilateral cooperation in the domains of trade and commerce, connectivity, energy and power, border security and management, water resources, defence and exchanges between people.



## Chapter 3

# Increasing India's Performances and Foreign Diplomacy Towards Vikshit Bharat

Dr. Alka Singh

Assistant Professor, Geography  
RIE, NCERT, Bhopal

### **Abstract**

India has made significant strides in enhancing its performances and foreign diplomacy towards Vikshit Bharat, aiming for sustainable, equitable, and peaceful environments. With a focus on diplomatic relations, technological advancement, democratic values, youth empowerment, women's rights, disarmament efforts, cultural promotion, and environmental sustainability, India is positioning itself as a pivotal global player. Through achievements such as successful space missions, population management, and active participation in international forums like the G20 and UN Security Council, India showcases its growing influence and commitment to global harmony. The nation's trajectory reflects a shift towards cooperative development rather than domination, embodying a new era of Indian power characterized by progress, collaboration, and inclusivity.

### **Introduction**

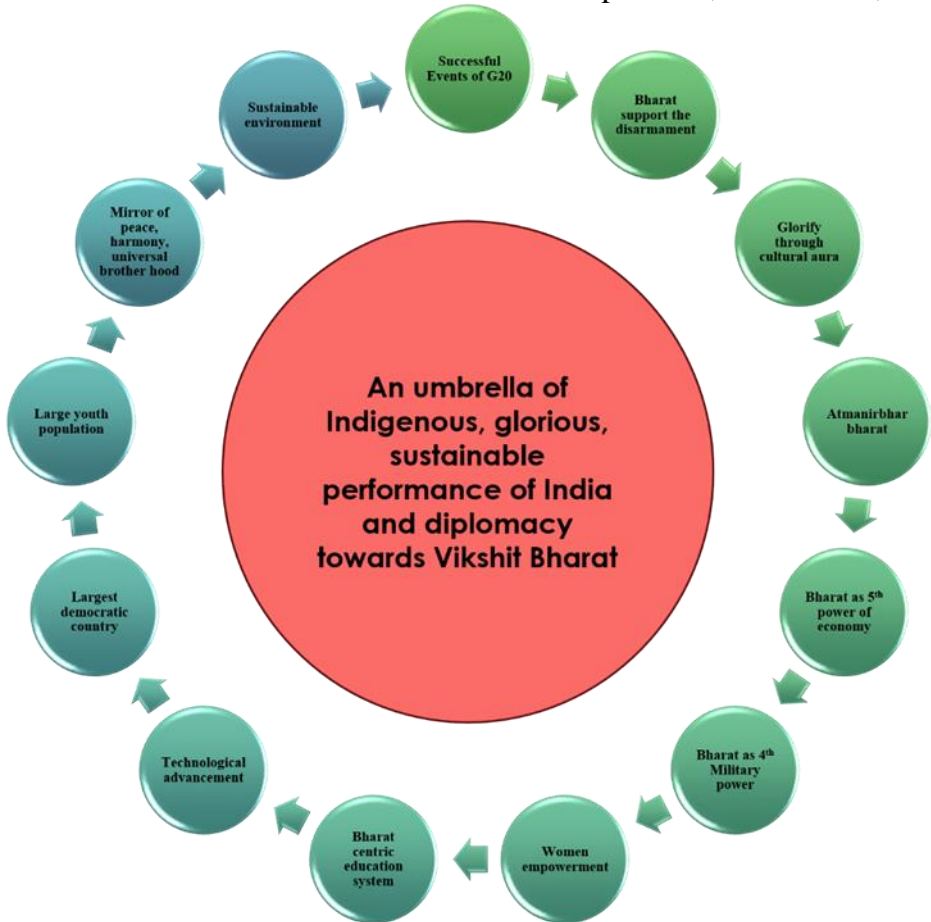
For a country to have a strong fortress as well as good diplomatic relations, it needs to maintain its security from the surrounding countries and other countries. This good diplomatic relationship is essentially necessary to maintain due to differences in geographical region and physical character. Physiography is the single factor that generates the variation in our resources, culture, behavior, temperament, ethos, needs, etc. So, these variations came or groomed the supremacy to other ones and tried to control their development and exploit their resources (physical and human resources). This kind of sequential action begins from the very primitive time and continues endeavor. In this way, the many countries always fight against each other for overruling one another. In this context, India is the country

where many people overruled from the 12th century (Gulam, Tuglaks, and Mugals to the British) to the 1947 years. Now, the Bharat celebrates their 75th Republic Day in 2024 and emerges as a new pivot of power, trying to achieve an aura of sustainable, affordable, equitable, and peaceful environments for all. In this context, if power is balanced, then terror is automatically balanced. In this way, international equilibrium for power is needed to remove the threat of terror because power is not used for progress or development while it is used to establish supremacy over other nations. They imposed their culture, trade, military, technique, policy, etc. (like Mugal, British, and China, USA in the Indian market) to make puppets of particular countries' people. But, side by side, one new situation is seen on the globe in the current geopolitical world platform, 'THAT IS BHARAT'. This new Bharat is identified as having great and strong diplomats, advanced technologies, self-reliance, the 5th economic power, the 4th military power, a large youth population, the largest democratic country, and women empowerment on the world platform. Moreover, this Naya Bharat, Shresta Bharat, and Aaj ka Bharat are following a strong, excellent diplomatic path through their Vedic to scientific temperament to achieve amrit kal ka akhand vikshit Bharat 2047.

### **Characteristics of Glorious Performances**

The achievements of India on the world's platform are gradually growing in numerous fields, which maintain sustainability in the natural environment and showcase their strong diplomacy for many countries. India has a good relationship with the USA, Russia, Ukraine, Japan, Israel, Australia, etc. after implementing many events. Successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 on southern hemisphere of moon; Large democratic country (after holding 1,436,150,123 population on January 27, 2024); large youth population (after holding 808 million with 66 percent of its total population below the age of 35 years); women empowerment shows as Nari Shakti Vandan Bill (70 percent more than female participants involved during the parade and exhibition on Republic Day, January 26, 2024); Bharat support the disarmament (Bharat asks Russia, Ukraine, to stop the war) to glorify peace and harmony for all; Inauguration of Shri Rama temple in Ayodhya that reflects the tradition hood Sanatana sentiments; Bharat centric education system try to exhibit their marvellous and precise Vedic to Geo-spatial scientific diaspora (brain drain word replaced by pillar holders in which almost world public

and private sector agencies run by at least one Bahartiya worker); Atmanirbhar bharat after creating the Naag anti-tank guided missile, Pinaca multi-bairal rocket launcher, Sarvatra mobile bridging system, Swati radar system, etc. All the above landmark successful achievements situated the Bharat with precious, incredible,



sustainable, universal brotherhood, harmonious characters on the global platform. In 2023 or today, India will take center or focal point at international summits. India has an impressive diplomatic schedule for 2023, with appointments to the presidency of the Group of Twenty (G20), chair of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), rotating head of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and participation in important summits such as the Group of Seven (G7), BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), Quad, and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Therefore, seriously, Bharat

emerges as a new power pivot on the global platform. To achieve this power of pivot, which is Bharat proof, some undefeatable and successful events and actions on world platforms are the following:

**Diplomatic relation:** India represent their successful example from time to time, such as threatening the Maldives after the flourishing of Lakshadweep Island; provide financial support to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka; and represent their strong presence in Nepal on the matter of the boundary and the Sarada river front. Support Israel on the matter of war with Hamas.

**Events of G20:** India focuses on a few core principles in order to discover long-term answers to some of the major global issues arising from the interconnection of the world, including food and energy security, climate change, and new and emerging technology.

**Technological advancement:** The successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the southern hemisphere of the moon by ISRO at a low cost is a new means of learning for scientists around the world. This is a great and untouchable achievement for India on a global platform.

**Largest democratic country:** India is shaping out as the largest democratic country and will hold 1,436,150,123 people on January 27, 2024. This number shows how a country moves towards the path of development after utilizing its potential.

**Large youth population:** Bharat holds the largest number of youths. Below 35 years of age, India has 808 million people, or 66 percent of its total population, which has huge potential for the working force.

**Women empowerment:** India passes a bill on the Nari Shakti Vandan bill in their parliament to enhance the qualitative status. Females hold 49 percent of the entire population, but their contribution to the economy is very low, or below one percent. But in the very recent past, 70 percent more males than females participated in the parade and exhibitions on Republic Day, January 26, 2024, in New Delhi.

**Bharat support the disarmament:** In order to secure international security and bring about world peace, India supports disarmament. Bharat asks Russia and Ukraine to stop the war to maintain reconciliation and harmony for all after participating in all CD, COP, UNEP, UNO, G20, G7 ASEAN, SCO, SAARC, etc. conventions.

**Glorify through cultural aura:** It will unite individuals with diverse backgrounds, views, and skill sets from across the globe to work toward a commendable goal. It will encourage people to appreciate

each other. The preservation of cultural legacy will aid in the understanding of what constitutes heritage for future generations. The cultural essence approach holds that a profound spiritual and intellectual heritage, with a strong focus on the interconnection of all living things, characterizes Indian culture. Inauguration of Shri Rama temple in Ayodhya that reflects the practice of Sanatana sentiments.

**Bharat centric education system:** In the present time, the education system focuses on IKS, STEM experiential and problem-solving learning, 360-degree learning, and also grooms the research orientation from school to higher education. It is trying to exhibit their marvellous and precise Vedic to geo-spatial scientific diaspora. Now, we ready to convey and accept the challenge of brain drain word but it replaced by pillars holders word in which, almost world public and privates sector agencies run by at least one Bahartiya worker); some examples plagiarism.

**Atmanirbhar bharat:** India is now ready to make self-reliant missiles, tanks (Naag anti-tank guided missiles, Pinaca multi-bairal rocket launchers, etc.), medicines during COVID, yoga, instruments, innovations in technology (Navik, Sarvatra mobile bridging systems, Swati radar systems, etc.), and then strengthen the path of the developed Bharat.

**Bharat as 5<sup>th</sup> power of economy:** According to the World Bank, India's GDP expanded by 6.9% in the fiscal year 2022-2023 and is projected to grow by 6.3% the following year. India is one of the world's fastest-growing economies and has attracted the attention of investors around the world.

**Bharat as 4<sup>th</sup> Military power:** The United States is the world's strongest military, as per the ranking of global firepower and its position in the World Military Power Rankings for The rankings evaluate 145 countries based on 60 factors and provide a nuanced view of military capability. Global Firepower uses a careful approach that considers about 60 factors to determine the military strength of countries. Factors include troop size, military equipment, economic stability, geographic location, and available resources. Power Index Score: 0. The point for reference is 0000, which is considered perfect. According to the ranking, the United States leads with a score of 0.0699, followed by Russia (0.0702) and China (0.0706). India has a power index of 0.1023.

**Mirror of peace, harmony and universal brother hood:** India is a land of festivals and celebrates these festivals. It aims to reduce wars

and encourage living equally in peace and harmony. "India is a peaceful and peaceful country. India spreads the message of brotherhood, harmony, and peace to the rest of the world. India worships nature." Universal brotherhood refers to the unity of society. It aims to reduce wars and encourage living in peace and harmony as equals. It rejects all racial, social, religious, economic, or other forms of classification or hierarchy.

**Sustainable environment:** Ecological sustainability is the ability to maintain the ecological balance of our planet and our natural environment and preserve natural resources to support the well-being of current and future generations. Environmental sustainability is important to preserve resources such as clean air, water, and wildlife for future generations. Another important definition of sustainability that Weinstein likes is "ensuring that human society functions within ecological limits." This definition is known as the planetary boundary (PB) concept. Reduce, reuse, and recycle. Reduce waste; volunteer Volunteer in your community; train; save water; select continuous; buy wisely; use long-lasting light bulbs; and plant trees.

### *Emerging roots for Vikshit Bharat*

*In the educator sector, foreign student is coming to study in India's IIT, ISRO, IISC, IISER*

*India make sound on global platforms in the sports field specially in tennis, hockey, cricket,*

*India is the first country to reach the southern hemisphere of moon among worlds country. New Space India Ltd. And Skyroot Aerospace are private company strengthen the space industry*

*Vande Bharat like many trains 100 percent electrified and strengthen the economy and public convenience facilities*

*Female participation in the field of military, scientist, business women, banking etc. platform represent herself as independent women and gradually increasing the number of work participation*

*Bharat is now refers as Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat on worlds platform and talk the matter of Vashudev Kutumbakam to Surgical strike for safety and security of people and country sovereignty*

## **Conclusion**

The country emerges as a new pivot and peacefully expands, with positive economic development, commercial progression, technological advancement, and military capabilities; powerful influence achieved through political dialogue; diverse cultural influences; ethical value judgment in moral discourse; and appealing traditional customs such as folklore, arts, crafts, handicrafts, etc.

Bharat has the possibility to lead the cornerstones of increasing the attraction, appreciation, admiration, inspiration, and love of all the nations of the world, like Russia and America. The great power attracts and supports India, while China always tries to ensure and show its strength against it. But in India, there is a new, young aura of power that is rising. The culture of this pivot is not to take control of another nation, but Bharat follows the path of development and continues to progress with all the nations of the planet Earth.

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## Chapter 4

### India – Bhutan Relations Recent Trends

Dr. Ashok Kumar Verma,

Assistant Professor, Department of Defence & Strategic Studies,  
Pratap Bahadur Post Graduate College, Pratapgarh City, Pratapgarh  
(UP)

#### **Abstract**

India and Bhutan have a one-of-a-kind relationship founded on a long history of cultural, economic, and political links. Despite its tiny size, Bhutan holds a strategic importance in South Asia and has been an important partner for India in regional cooperation efforts. Bhutan's border issues with China and its ties with India have recently been under scrutiny, with fears that the kingdom would drift away from its traditional ally, India. While Bhutan has been negotiating with China over its territorial concerns, recent developments indicate that continuity remains a major concern in Bhutan-India relations.

Key Words- Culture, Security, Regional Cooperation, history.

#### **Introduction**

The relationship between India and Bhutan, a tiny Himalayan nation, can be used as a model for South Asian friendship and goodwill. The 1949 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation (TFC), which was ratified in 2007 to meet the demands of the changing times, has served as the main framework for India-Bhutan relations for the past 60 years. A treaty that Bhutan signed with the British emperors in 1910 almost saw an extension with the TFC. Following the signing of the treaty in 1910, Bhutan became a protectorate of British India, permitting the British to "guide" its defence and foreign policy. In terms of international law, a protectorate is an independent territory that is shielded from outsiders either diplomatically or militarily by a more powerful state or entity. On August 8, 1949, India and Bhutan signed the TFC. This agreement served as the fundamental foundation for the two nations' bilateral relations for a very long time. The treaty guaranteed, among other things, mutual respect and goodwill, unrestricted trade and commerce, and equal justice for both countries' citizens. Protocols for extradition were established by the TFC.

With the appointment of an Indian resident representative in Thimphu, diplomatic ties between India and Bhutan were established. Prior to this, our political officer in Sikkim handled our relations with



Bhutan. The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which the two nations signed in 1949 and was updated and signed during His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck's visit to India in February 2007, serves as the fundamental framework for bilateral relations between India and Bhutan. The India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty not only reflects the contemporary nature of our relationship but also lays the foundation for their future development in the 21st century. Amongst others, the Treaty provides for perpetual peace and friendship, free

Trade and commerce, and equal justice to each other's citizens. The traditionally unique bilateral relations, characterised by trust and understanding have matured over the years. Today, there is a lot of cooperation in the area of economic growth, particularly in the hydropower industry, which benefits both parties.

### **Political Relations**

Following state visits to India by the Third King of the Himalayan state, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, and to Bhutan by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in the 1950s, Indo-Bhutan relations started to mature. In addition to reiterating India's recognition of Bhutan's independence and sovereignty in his public speech in Paro, Nehru's visit in 1958 was significant for launching talks between the two nations about development cooperation. The appointment of a special officer of the Government of India (GoI) to Bhutan marked the beginning of official ties between India and the tiny Himalayan country. As of May 14, 1968, the India House, or embassy, in Thimpu has been operational. In 1971, the two nations' resident representatives were switched. When Residents were upgraded to embassies in 1978, ambassadorial-level contacts between both the two neighbours started. When India sponsored Bhutan's application for UN membership in 1971, Bhutan's formal relations with the outside world began. Bhutan and Bangladesh formally reestablished diplomatic ties in 1972. Following that, the tiny Himalayan nation forged diplomatic ties with a large number of nations, though Bhutan had not yet done so with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC). Article 2 of the Indo-Bhutan TFC was not a limiting factor in Bhutan's foreign policy, as shown by the country's diplomatic ties to the rest of the world.

India and Bhutan have also signed a number of agreements and memorandums of understanding recently. A protocol to the intergovernmental agreement on the Tala hydroelectric project was

signed in July 2006, during the visit of the Fourth King of Bhutan. The protocol outlines the framework for hydropower cooperation and the business arrangements for the purchase of electricity from the project. A Trade, Commerce, and Transit Agreement was also signed. Prior to these, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on an air services agreement was signed in June 2005, calling for an increase in the number of flights between the two countries from 12 to 49 per week. The Royal Civil Service Commission of Bhutan and the Indian Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in November 2005, formalising their institutional cooperation. In May 2006, the two election commissions signed a new Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation. The Nehru-Wangchuk Scholarship Memorandum of Understanding was signed in June 2009 during the visit to Bhutan by the Indian Foreign Minister.

12 agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were signed between the two countries in December 2009 during the visit of King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk to India. These talked about collaborating more closely in industries like IT, hydropower, health and medicine, agriculture, civil aviation, and drugs. Four of these 12 agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) were signed for the development and revision of the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for the Amochhu Reservoir Hydroelectric Project (HEP), the Kuri Gongri HEP, the Chamkharchhu-I HEP, and the Kholongchhu HEP. The establishment of the Bhutan Institute of Medical Sciences, the MoU on Drug Demand Reduction and Prevention of Illegal Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, and Precursor Chemicals and Related Matters, the Air Services Agreement, the Agreement for Search and Rescue Operation Services, the MoU on Technical Assistance to the National Environment Commission of Bhutan, the MoU on Consultancy Services for the Preparation of the National Transmission Plan, and other important Memoranda of Understanding were among the others. The Implementation Agreements for the Punatsangchhu-II and Mangdechhu HEPs were signed by the Indian External Affairs Minister, S. M. Krishna, and the Bhutanese Minister of Economic Affairs, Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, in the presence of the prime ministers of India and Bhutan in April 2010 during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Bhutan for the 16th SAARC Summit. All of these agreements and Memoranda of Understanding between

Bhutan and India over the past 60 years show their mutual trust, understanding, and goodwill.

Narendra Modi chose Bhutan as the destination of his first international trip after being elected Indian Prime Minister in an effort to uphold this goodwill and trust. On June 15–16, 2014, Modi made an official visit to Bhutan, which served as a signal of India's emphasis on neighbourhood relations, with a focus on Bhutan, a longtime ally and emerging democracy. The national security advisor, the foreign secretary, and other senior officials were part of a high-level delegation that the prime minister of India, Narendra Modi, led to Bhutan. On June 16, 2014, the new Indian prime minister spoke to the joint session of the Bhutanese parliament. During his visit, Narendra Modi dedicated the Supreme Court building that India helped build and laid the cornerstone for the 600 MW Kholongchu HEP. Prime Minister Modi also announced a doubling of the Nehru Wangchuck Scholarship to Rs 2 crore per year, in addition to exchanging opinions and talking about bilateral relations and economic cooperation. Additionally, he declared that the GoI would support the establishment of an electronic library at the National Library of Bhutan and in each of the country's 20 districts. The two sides concurred to maintain close coordination and cooperation in areas pertaining to their national interests and to refrain from using one another's territory for purposes that were the other's enemies. On November 7-8, 2014, Indian President Pranab Mukherjee made a state visit to Bhutan at the king's invitation. He spoke with His Majesty the King of Bhutan about a variety of topics during the visit, including bilateral and international issues. He also had meetings with Prime Minister Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay and His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo. Nitin Gadkari, India's Minister of Road Transport, Highways, and Shipping, visited Bhutan on June 15–16, 2015. The transport ministers of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal signed the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement on June 15, 2015, in Thimphu. The high-level bilateral meetings went on and amply illustrated how strong the relations between India and Bhutan.

### **Economic Relations**

India and Bhutan's economic development initiatives have a long history of cooperation. As was already mentioned, India has over the years provided full funding for a large number of Bhutan's development projects. Bhutan began to develop with a plan in 1961, and the GoI fully funded the first two Five-Year Plans (FYPs). From

Rs 107 million in the First FYP (1962-66) to Rs 9,000 million in the Eighth FYP, Indian aid has steadily increased (1997-2002). India continues to be Bhutan's top foreign aid donor, despite the country's foreign aid sources having changed significantly since it joined the UN. India made up about 41% of all foreign spending during Bhutan's eighth FYP. India made a contribution to Bhutan's social sectors, including human resources, hydropower, agriculture, roads, and education and health. India contributed Rs 2,610.14 crore to Bhutan's Ninth FYP (2002-08) in aid.

The Indian Embassy in Thimphu reports that Rs. 907 crores will be used for project-related assistance, Rs. 820 crores for programme grants, and the remaining amount will be used for various refunds and subsidies. Major projects with Indian assistance. The construction of 10 new schools, 306 low-income housing units, the renovation of Semtokha Dzong, two youth centres, human resource development, telecommunications, and projects in agriculture and related industries were all completed during the Ninth Plan. The 350-bed JDWNR Hospital in Thimphu and the Regional Referral Hospital in Mongar were also completed. Additionally, India has funded feasibility studies for building rail connections between a few towns along the Bhutan-India border. During the tenth FYP (2008–2013), the GoI committed to providing assistance worth Rs 3,400 crore. This includes project-tied assistance (Rs 2,000 crore for approximately 70 projects in important socioeconomic sectors like agriculture, information and communications technology (ICT), media, health/hospitals, education/schools, capacity-building, energy, culture, and infrastructure, etc.), programme grant (Rs 700 crore), and small development projects (Rs 700 crore). The building of the Supreme Court, the strengthening of constitutional officers like the Royal Audit Authority, Election Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission, and Attorney General, the renovation of significant Dzongs, the setting up of DPRS for significant power projects, the widening of significant roads, scholarships, and the expansion of tertiary educational institutions are just a few of the significant projects being carried out under the Tenth Plan. Additionally, Bhutan and India engage in extensive trade. India is currently Bhutan's top trading partner. There is a system of free trade between India and Bhutan. The trade and commerce agreement between India and Bhutan, which was set to expire in March 2005, has been extended for another ten years.

Appliances, base metal and base metal products, cereals, fruits, nuts, coffee, prepared food items, transport equipment, chemical products, animal products, vegetable oil, plastic and rubber products, textiles, and wood and wood products are just a few examples of the products that fall under this category.

In addition to these, a significant portion of Indian exports over the years included high speed diesel oil, polyester motor spirit, including aviation spirit, mineral products, machinery and mechanical appliances, and transport vehicles. Bhutan's auto market is dominated by Indian cars, which currently account for more than 80% of global sales. Electricity, calcium carbide, gypsum, ferrosilicon, particle board, and Portland cement are the main Bhutanese imports into India. Bhutan's exports to India represented an average of 86.5% of its exports between 1981 and 2001, and its imports from India represented an average of 79% of all imports. The State Bank of India (SBI) and the Bank of Bhutan (BoB) have partnered in management and ownership. The SBI offers professional assistance in managing the ownership of BoB shares and in staff development at the top bank in Bhutan. Additionally, on the basis of permits given by the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Bhutan, Indian nationals conduct a variety of small-scale commercial and service activities. These businesses include small stores that deal in a range of goods like groceries, furniture, and auto parts, as well as scrap dealers, distribution companies, and dealership firms. In Bhutan, Indians also own and operate hotels, restaurants, bars, tailoring shops, and shoe repair shops.

### **Security Relations**

Bhutan's geographic proximity to both China and India has increased its geopolitical significance and made it essential to India's strategic objectives. As a result, India and Bhutan have always had close security ties. According to the TFC of 1949, India would be responsible for ensuring Bhutan's security. Following the TFC's ratification in 2007, India continued to support Bhutan's security. The Royal Bhutanese army received equipment and training from Indian defence forces to become a formidable force. The Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT), which has also established hospitals for both civilians and Bhutanese military personnel, has provided the training. The Bhutanese government continues to send its military cadets to the Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun and the National Defense Academy in Pune (both in India). Bhutan's security policies

have been more effectively implemented thanks to the extensive and significant road links built in Bhutan by the Indian Border Roads Organization (BRO). Bhutan also backed India's claims for a permanent seat in the UNSC, the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ) in South Asia, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Bhutan also gave India strong support following its nuclear tests in 1998.

When Indian insurgent groups like the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), National Democratic Front of Bodos (NDFB), and Kamtapuri Liberation Organization (KLO) established camps in the jungles of south-east Bhutan for carrying out militant activities against the Indian state, the security relations between India and Bhutan were severely put to the test. The presence of these militants posed a potential threat to the cordial relations between India and Bhutan in addition to interfering with daily activities, commercial activities, and development projects in Bhutan. They posed security risks to the tiny Himalayan state as well. The militants were repeatedly urged to leave peacefully by the Bhutanese government. Finally, the Bhutanese army began military operations to drive out militants in December 2003 after the Bhutan government's talks with the ULFA and NDFB fell through and the KLO remained silent. It successfully crushed the militants after seizing control of more than 30 of their camps. Bhutan's swift actions against the militants not only demonstrated its resolute determination to stop anti-Indian activities on its soil, but they also highlighted Bhutan's desire to contribute to the peace in India. The Bhutanese army amply proved its capacity to bring about peace both within its borders and in the surrounding area. Bhutan's positive attitude in flushing out anti-India elements and activities, also added strengths to India-Bhutan security relations.

### **Cultural Relations**

Close bilateral ties exist between the two South Asian neighbours in the fields of education and culture. Bhutan benefits from the technical know-how and professional services of India in a number of educational fields. Before, 50 Bhutanese students received the GoI scholarships each year at the undergraduate and graduate levels from universities in India. Under Bhutan's Tenth Plan (2008–2013), undergraduate scholarships are now worth 85 per year, while postgraduate scholarships are now 77. These GoI scholarships are in addition to the 80 training slots each year that have been allotted to Bhutan through the Colombo Plan's Technical Cooperation Scheme

(TCS) for Neighboring Countries and Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC). The GoI provides air tickets, book allowances, lodging and living expenses for participants in both ITEC and TCS. Additionally, scholarships offered by the Indian ambassador (to Bhutan) are given to deserving and meritorious students who wish to study in India. Every year, ten school students from Bhutan are accepted into Sainik schools in India, and the GoI covers all costs. Due to its affiliation with Delhi University in India, Sherbutse College, located in east Bhutan, has grown to become one of the country's top educational institutions. Under the TCS of the Colombo Plan, about 30 lecturers who are based in India have been posted to this college.

In August 2003, the India-Bhutan Foundation (IBF) was founded with the goal of fostering intercultural dialogue in the fields of education, culture, and environmental preservation. The co-chairmen of IBF are the ambassadors of India and Bhutan. The GoI has contributed Rs 5 crore to the IBF's main corpus, and the Royal Government of Bhutan has matched that amount (RGoB). IBF's most recent gathering took place in India in January 2011. It provided support for the first-ever Gross National Happiness (GNH) seminar between India and Bhutan in March 2011 in Thimphu. Mountain Echoes, a literary festival sponsored by the IBF, took place in May 2010. Leading authors and publishers from Bhutan and India took part in the inaugural India-Bhutan Literary Festival. The Nehru-Wangchuk Scholarship was established by India in 2010 to encourage students from Bhutan to enroll in top Indian universities and institutions. In September 2010, the Nehru-Wangchuk Cultural Center was established in Thimphu by the GoI and RGoB. Regular cultural exchanges between the two countries occur with the assistance of government and non-government organisations in India and Bhutan. The Government of India offers more than 950 scholarships each year for Bhutanese students to study in India in a variety of fields such as engineering and medicine. Approximately 4,000 Bhutanese are thought to be enrolled in undergraduate programmes at Indian universities on a self-financing basis.

### **Covid-19 Assistance**

In keeping with the unique and special relationships between India and Bhutan, the GoI made sure that trade and necessities reached Bhutan even during lock-downs related to COVID-19. The GoI also provided the Royal Government of Bhutan with essential medications

and medical equipment, such as Paracetamol, Hydroxychloroquine, PPEs, N95 masks, x-ray machines, and test kits. Following the lockdowns in India, the Government of India has facilitated the return to Bhutan of more than 2000 Bhutanese nationals who were stranded in various areas of India. Bhutan received 5.5 lakh doses of the Made-in-India Covishield vaccines as part of the Vaccine Maitri Initiative, allowing it to immunize its adult population from March to April 2021.

### **Developmental cooperation**

India has made a significant contribution to Bhutan's socioeconomic development over the past few decades, all the while respecting the country's government's priorities and its citizens' needs. The estimated total budget expenditure for Bhutan in the 12th FYP (November 2018–October 2023) is Nu. 31000 crores, of which the GoI has committed to providing assistance worth Nu. 4500 crores, which is at the same level as the 11th FYP.

### **Challenges**

There have been instances when India has meddled in Bhutan's internal affairs. This has led to negative perception of India in the minds of Bhutanese. There is a growing feeling in Bhutan that India's development of Bhutan's hydropower production is driven by self-interest as it is getting Bhutan's surplus power at relatively cheap rates.

Bhutan's concern regarding profitability of its Hydropower projects in the wake of India's shift to renewable sources of energy like wind, solar etc. From internal security perspective, illicit establishment of camps by militant outfits in the dense jungles of south-east Bhutan is a cause of concern for both the nations. China's continuous claims to important border areas such as Chumbi valley and Doklam and its continuous efforts for establishing strong diplomatic and economic relations with Bhutan have been continuous source of concern for India.

### **Way Forward**

India needs to step up efforts to publicize the benefits that accrue to Bhutan from Indian projects. India continuously needs to explore new areas of cooperation with Bhutan. Decision of setting up of ISRO's ground station in Bhutan is a welcome step. The station will help Bhutan in providing weather related messages to its far flung areas. India should try as much as possible to remain out of Bhutan's internal matters, though it can act as a mentor. Safety of Border from China is



a concern for both nations. Therefore, both sides need to work together on this issue. Also, it needs to be ensured that border areas remain militants free. Being neighbours, it is necessary that both nations continuously recognize value of each other. For this, regular high level visits from both the sides are necessary.

Bhutan's peaceful transition to democracy has been a positive development for South Asia. But up until this point, the monarchy had largely governed this transition. The democratic system in Bhutan is likely to become stronger over time, leading to a more pluralistic society. On the other hand, it might result in the growth of oppositional groups and associations. In that case, it might be difficult in the future to articulate diverse demands and interests. Bhutan needs to focus on creating a strong democratic infrastructure to support domestic democratic demands. Bhutan can get crucial advice from India, a mature democracy in the area, in this situation. To put it simply, closer collaboration between Bhutan and India is required moving forward to ensure the proper emergence of a democratic political system in Bhutan. A democracy must also be self-sufficient economically and militarily in order to maintain its goals. Bhutan must continue down this path toward economic and military independence. For Bhutan's future economic growth and the maintenance of democracy in the tiny Himalayan state, India's cooperation and leadership would be crucial.

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## Chapter 5

# India – Bangladesh Economic Relations In Light of Post Pandemic Scenario

Dr. Chandresh Pandey

Assistant Professor

GSPG College, Sultanpur, U.P

### **Abstract**

Since the rise of Bangladesh as an independent nation in Dec 1971, India-Bangladesh relations as always been critical for the growth of both the countries particularly due to their shared cultures and history tied together. In the present era of globalisation, especially in the post pandemic era, the importance of the economic cooperation between both the countries has increased manifold. This article discusses the historical economic relations and opportunities for both the countries in the year ahead.

**Keywords:** Geographical Proximity, Bilateral Trade, Blue Economy.

### **Introduction**

The two neighbours, India and Bangladesh, are organically linked — with their common heritage and shared history, common memories of tragic loss, and the separation of families on a massive scale following the Partition of India in 1947. These historical ties have translated into multidimensional and ever-expanding bilateral relations between the two nations. Their geographical proximity presents an opportunity for both nations to further strengthen their connectivity and economies.

Fifty years ago, India was a major part of the Bangladesh War of Liberation on 1971 as it helped the then, East Pakistan turn into a new country, Bangladesh and this changed the dynamics of South Asia forever. India was one of the first countries, along with Bhutan, to recognise Bangladesh as a sovereign state on 6 December 1971. With the birth of Bangladesh, India signed a 25-year ‘Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.’ It is also worth recalling that India shares its longest border of 4,096.7 kilometres with Bangladesh, which is also the fifth longest border in the contemporary world. For India, Bangladesh holds a place of great importance as it is an immediate neighbour and a valuable pillar of India’s ‘Neighbourhood First Policy’.

### **INDIA-BANGLADESH ECONOMIC COOPERATION:**

Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia and India is the second biggest trade partner of Bangladesh. Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh has grown steadily over the last decade and the exports of Bangladesh have tripled over the last decade to cross \$1 bn in 2018-19. In the FY 2019-20, India's exports to Bangladesh were \$8.2 bn and imports were \$1.26 bn. Meetings of various institutional mechanisms to promote bilateral trade include that of Secretary level meetings of Commerce and shipping ministries, LCS/ICP infrastructure and establishment of Indian Economic Zone etc. In order to promote cooperation on bilateral trade, an India-Bangladesh CEO's Forum was launched in December 2020 to provide policy level inputs in various areas of trade and investment and also to facilitate exchanges among the business communities of both the countries. The first meeting of the India-Bangladesh Textile Industry Forum was held in February 2020 to enhance linkages and collaboration in the textile sector.

Cooperation in the power sector has become one of the hallmarks of India- Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh is currently importing 1160 MW of power from India. The Joint Working Group (JWG)/Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on power provides an institutional framework to promote bilateral cooperation in cross border trade of electricity.

The settlement of the maritime boundary dispute in 2014, the ratification of the Land Boundary Agreement and the successful exchange of enclaves in 2015 have been major developments in the India-Bangladesh economic relationship in recent years. The two countries also cooperate in diverse sectors such as space, IT, shipping, electronics, energy, tourism and the civil nuclear programme, with 90 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) inked.

Bangladesh is the biggest development partner of India today. India has extended 3 Lines of Credits (LOC) to Bangladesh in the last 8 years amounting to US\$ 8 billion for development of infrastructure in various sectors including roads, railways, shipping and ports. In addition to LOCs, the Government of India has also been providing grant assistance to Bangladesh for various infrastructure projects including construction of Akhaura-Agartala rail link, dredging of inland waterways in Bangladesh and construction of India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline.

The potential for improved economic ties also provides India and Bangladesh an opportunity to ascend regional and global value chains

by boosting their manufacturing sectors and investment environments. Organisations such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal initiative (BBIN) could play a catalysing role in shaping regional prosperity and introducing a greater focus on environmental and service-provision cooperation.

**Potential of the blue economy:**

The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration in 2018 brought cooperation in the Blue Economy (BE) sector more firmly within its purview by establishing an inter-governmental expert group.<sup>31</sup> Leveraging on the potential of the BE in the Bay of Bengal has been a crucial factor in strengthening the India-Bangladesh economic partnership. Bangladesh has a well-devised BE policy, which sets a framework for sustainable development and transnational cooperation in sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, biotechnology and submarine mining. By facilitating dialogue and creating opportunities for cross-border collaboration, organisations like the BIMSTEC are uniquely poised to further economic interactions and contribute to the shaping of regions that are more integrated and are better able to cope with global transformations. India's Act East Policy—and within it, BIMSTEC—has the potential to revamp international partnerships, and cooperation between India and Bangladesh could pave the way for a renewed form of pro-active regionalism, especially via further integrated sea routes.

BIMSTEC, which has thus far not enjoyed the same level of significance as SAARC and other regional organisations, shows immense promise, given the strategically important locations of its member countries in the Bay of Bengal region (with several ports and potential sea-trade routes). BIMSTEC could become a major driver of regional economic growth and expand the region's role in the global trade order. Greater ties between India and Bangladesh with respect to connectivity will help revitalise the BIMSTEC region, pushing the otherwise poorly connected member nations to integrate for the flow of goods and services.

Additionally, one of the primary goals of the BBIN initiative is to develop functional transport corridors and subsequently convert them to economic corridors that will play an instrumental role in strengthening existing value chains and creating new ones. The potential for overseas trade via improved sea-route connectivity is

immense, and India and Bangladesh can be key drivers of this in the region, given that both are connected to the immense economic potential of the Bay of Bengal.

The recent revamp and the introduction of the Kolkata-Chattogram (Chittagong) sea route through the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route will also foster greater BE cooperation. On 16 July 2020, the first consignment was flagged off from Kolkata Port headed towards Agartala and Assam via the Chittagong Sea Port, signalling a new beginning of trade connectivity between the Bay of Bengal region and Northeast India. Reducing time and costs for overseas shipments, creating alternative corridors for trade and moving towards extending multi-modal connectivity are imperative to overcome the pandemic-induced vulnerabilities.

### **CONCLUSION:**

India has a stake in Bangladesh not only for the security of its eastern borders but also for other strategic advantages. Therefore, it cannot afford to let go of the recently achieved opportunity to break away from the past trajectory and establish new contours of engagement with Bangladesh. In many ways, this is a rare opportunity for both the countries to talk with each other and resolve differences.

A key element of India's foreign policy has been to ensure a 'peaceful periphery'—a friendly and cooperative working relationship with all its neighbouring countries. This objective, for various reasons, has remained unfulfilled especially with regard to Pakistan. A certain lingering distrust and suspicion continues to trouble the ties with the other neighbours too. In this overall picture, Bangladesh presents a ray of hope. In a very real sense, the ties with Bangladesh are of critical importance to India's South Asian relations and to its burgeoning relations with Southeast Asia.

In the post-pandemic environment, many countries are likely to dedicate intensive efforts to reboot their industries and protect their vital supplies. Ensuring the availability of essentials in the event of future crises can be achieved by safeguarding critical domestic industries and diversifying their supply chains, which will require targeted policy measures. With costs only bound to rise, a growing sense of protectionism and uncertainty in the global trade market, India and Bangladesh may find their friendly neighbourhood ties advantageous.

The pandemic has led to a serious discussion on the changing global order and has hinted towards a breakaway from China and its

manufacturing sector. With several countries shifting their production out of China and into other Southeast and South Asian countries, India and Bangladesh can benefit from this situation. The overall business environment must be enhanced, but the low levels of labour productivity in both countries could be a potential roadblock to capitalising on firms moving out of China.

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## Chapter 6

# Challenges in Border Management of Ladakh Region from the Perspective of National Security

Jai Kishan Singh

(Research Scholar)

Department of Defence and Strategic Studies

University of Allahabad

### **Abstract**

Found in India's northernmost territory, Ladakh presents distinctive challenges in border management, carrying profound implications for national security. This strategically vital region shares its international frontiers with both China and Pakistan, establishing it as a central point for geopolitical tensions. This summary offers a brief overview of the main obstacles associated with border management in Ladakh. Ladakh's intricate terrain, featuring rugged landscapes, extreme weather conditions, and limited infrastructure, poses substantial logistical impediments in terms of deploying and directing security forces. The disputed Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China leads to recurrent clashes and disagreements, requiring a continuous military presence. Moreover, Ladakh's proximity to Pakistan-administered Kashmir adds an additional layer of complexity due to the potential for cross-border infiltration and insurgent activities. The significance of Ladakh from a strategic perspective is indisputable, given its close proximity to the Siachen Glacier and crucial supply routes. Additionally, the region boasts considerable economic potential due to its extensive natural resources. Striking a balance between utilizing these resources and safeguarding national security interests requires a delicate equilibrium.

This summary underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to border management, integrating both military preparedness and diplomatic efforts aimed at reducing tensions. It emphasizes the importance of enhancing infrastructure to improve the movement of troops and connectivity in remote border areas. Moreover, a multifaceted strategy is imperative to address the intricate security dynamics arising from the region's geopolitical positioning. In



summary, the difficulties in managing borders in Ladakh are closely connected to concerns regarding national security. A successful strategy should involve preparedness of the military, the improvement of infrastructure, and diplomatic efforts to guarantee the security and stability of this strategically important area.

Keywords- National security, Border, Strategic Locations, LAC, Geopolitical, Geographical

## **Introduction**

The intricate challenges of managing borders in Ladakh are closely intertwined with India's overarching national security priorities. Located in the northernmost part of the Indian subcontinent, Ladakh shares its borders with two formidable neighbors, China and Pakistan. This geographical positioning not only emphasizes the strategic significance of Ladakh but also underscores the intricacies involved in ensuring national security in such a rugged landscape. The region's distinctive geography, severe climatic conditions, and historical border disputes combine to create a dynamic security environment that necessitates unwavering vigilance and adaptability. This introductory overview establishes the foundation for a comprehensive exploration of the diverse hurdles and imperatives associated with border management in Ladakh within the context of India's national security.

Emphasizing the management of Ladakh's borders is crucial due to its profound impact on India's national security and geopolitical objectives.<sup>4</sup> Maintaining Relations with Neighbors: Given Ladakh's strategic border location, it is of paramount importance to engage in diplomatic and harmonious relations with neighboring nations. A peaceful Ladakh contributes to a broader environment of peaceful international interactions, reducing the potential for external conflicts affecting domestic. Ladakh possesses a unique cultural heritage, encompassing monasteries, artistic traditions, and cultural practices that enhance India's diverse cultural tapestry. Safeguarding and promoting this heritage can nurture a sense of pride and identity among the people of Ladakh, positively influencing internal peace.

Ladakh's pristine natural environment serves not only as a source of sustainable tourism and economic advantages but also as a critical element in local and national well-being. The protection of this environment is a fundamental aspect of preserving internal peace, ensuring a wholesome and sustainable ecosystem.

## **Importance of border management in Ladakh**

Border management in Ladakh is of immense importance for various compelling reasons:

- **Ensuring National Security:** Ladakh's international borders with China and Pakistan place it at the forefront of India's efforts to safeguard its national security. Effective border management is essential to deter external threats and preserve territorial integrity.
- **Resolving Border Disputes:** Ladakh encompasses disputed areas, including the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. These conflicts necessitate a well-structured and robust approach to border management, aiming to prevent hostilities and seek diplomatic solutions.
- **Overcoming Challenging Terrain:** Ladakh's unforgiving topography and extreme weather conditions present unique challenges in border management. It is imperative to establish the required infrastructure and logistical support for facilitating troop movements and ensuring readiness in this demanding environment.
- **Countering Cross-Border Infiltration:** Given its proximity to Pakistan-administered Kashmir, Ladakh faces the risk of cross-border infiltration and insurgent activities. Effective border management is crucial to prevent security breaches and maintain internal peace.
- **Recognizing Strategic Significance:** The region's strategic location, especially its proximity to the Siachen Glacier and vital supply routes, highlights the importance of border management in ensuring military readiness and national defense.
- **Nurturing Economic Interests:** Ladakh possesses natural resources and substantial economic potential, particularly in the tourism sector. The protection of these resources and the efficient management of economic activities along the border are pivotal for regional development and the nation's prosperity.
- **Geopolitical Relevance:** Ladakh's geopolitical significance extends to India's broader regional and global positioning. Effective border management plays a role in India's diplomatic engagements and international relations.

In summary, border management in Ladakh is indispensable for national security, conflict prevention, addressing challenging terrain, countering cross-border threats, and realizing economic potential. It

constitutes a crucial component of India's strategic posture in the region.

### **Challenges in Border Management in Ladakh**

The management of borders in Ladakh presents a range of complex challenges, which consist of:

- **Demanding High-Altitude Environment:** Ladakh's rugged, high-altitude landscape, coupled with its harsh weather conditions, presents significant logistical hurdles when it comes to deploying and sustaining security forces. Severe cold and challenging terrain can affect the mobility of troops and infrastructure development.
- **Border Disputes:** Ladakh shares contested borders with China, resulting in frequent confrontations and standoffs along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Resolving these disputes and maintaining stability is an ongoing challenge.
- **Cross-Border Infiltration:** Ladakh's proximity to Pakistan-administered Kashmir makes it susceptible to cross-border infiltration and insurgent activities, necessitating the implementation of robust border security measures.
- **Infrastructure Improvement:** Ladakh's remote location requires substantial investments in infrastructure development to enhance connectivity and streamline the movement of troops and supplies.
- **Geopolitical Tensions:** Ladakh's strategic location amplifies geopolitical tensions in the region, underscoring the importance of diplomatic efforts to manage these tensions and prevent escalations.
- **Altitude-Related Health Concerns:** The high altitude can impact the well-being and effectiveness of security personnel, requiring specialized training and medical facilities.
- **Resource Limitations:** Ladakh's isolation results in limited resources, which can pose constraints in terms of troop deployment and the development of necessary infrastructure.
- **Environmental Considerations:** The delicate ecosystem in Ladakh can be influenced by the presence of military installations and the movement of troops. Striking a balance between security needs and environmental preservation is a complex challenge.

- **Economic Development:** Managing Ladakh's economic potential while ensuring it aligns with security interests necessitates a delicate equilibrium.

In summary, the challenges in Ladakh's border management are multifaceted, encompassing a high-altitude landscape, border disputes, cross-border threats, infrastructure requirements, geopolitical complexities, altitude-related health issues, resource constraints, environmental preservation, and economic development. Effectively addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring security and stability in this strategically significant region.

### **Government works in Ladakh**

The Indian government has proactively taken various measures and implemented strategies to manage the borders in Ladakh. These actions include:

- **Deployment of Military Forces:** The government has established a substantial military presence in Ladakh to protect national interests and secure the borders. This military presence includes the Indian Army, Border Security Force (BSF), and other paramilitary units.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Significant efforts are being made to enhance infrastructure in Ladakh. This includes constructing roads, bridges, airfields, and advanced landing facilities to improve connectivity and the mobility of security forces.
- **Surveillance and Monitoring:** The government has made investments in advanced surveillance technologies such as drones, satellite imagery, and radar systems to monitor border regions and detect any suspicious activities.
- **Border Barriers:** In sensitive areas, the government is erecting border fencing and barriers to discourage infiltration and bolster border security.
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** The government actively participates in diplomatic negotiations and discussions with neighboring countries, particularly China, to address border disputes and promote peaceful coexistence.
- **Community Engagement:** Involving local communities is a crucial aspect of border management. Building trust and

cooperation with resident's aids in gathering intelligence and maintaining law and order.

- **Disaster Preparedness:** Ladakh's challenging terrain and climate require specific preparedness measures. The government ensures that both troops and residents are well-prepared to handle natural disasters and extreme weather conditions
- **Economic Development Promotion:** The government is actively encouraging economic activities, including tourism and local industries, as part of border management. This not only benefits the local economy but also enhances border security by involving local populations.
- **Environmental Conservation:** Efforts are being made to strike a balance between security needs and environmental preservation, ensuring that military activities do not harm the fragile ecosystem of the region.
- **Healthcare and Altitude Training:** Specialized healthcare facilities and altitude training programs are being provided to military personnel to mitigate health risks associated with Ladakh's high-altitude environment.

These initiatives are aimed at ensuring effective border management in Ladakh, with the overarching objectives of protecting national security and maintaining peace and stability in the region.

### **Role of Technology in Border Management**

Technology's role in India's border management is highly significant, contributing substantially to both national security and operational efficiency. This is accomplished through a range of essential functions:

- **Surveillance and Monitoring:** Deploying advanced surveillance systems, including drones, satellites, and ground-based sensors, for the real-time monitoring of remote and challenging border regions, supplying data on suspicious activities and movements.
- **Fencing and Barriers:** Introducing technologically enhanced border fencing equipped with sensors and alarms to prevent unauthorized crossings and intrusions.

- **Biometric and Identification Systems:** Using biometric tools such as fingerprint and iris scanning to ensure precise identification of individuals entering or leaving the country, thereby enhancing security and immigration control.
- **Data Analytics:** Leveraging big data analytics and artificial intelligence to efficiently process extensive information, enabling authorities to effectively identify patterns and potential threats.
- **Communication Systems:** Establishing modern communication infrastructure to enable seamless communication among border personnel, facilitating swift responses to emerging situations.
- **GIS and Mapping:** Utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for mapping and analyzing border regions, aiding in improved decision-making and resource allocation.
- **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)\*\*:** Deploying drones for surveillance, reconnaissance, and intelligence gathering along the border, reducing risks to personnel.
- **Biometric Smart Cards:** Issuing smart cards with biometric data to residents in border areas, simplifying identification processes and enhancing security.
- **Automated Border Control:** Implementing automated passport control systems and facial recognition technology to streamline immigration procedures at border crossings.
- **Cybersecurity:** Ensuring the safeguarding of critical infrastructure and data from cyber threats is of paramount importance for border security, with advanced cybersecurity measures being integral.
- **Data Sharing:** Utilizing technology to facilitate efficient data sharing and coordination among various security agencies and international partners, thereby enhancing cross-border security efforts.

In summary, technology plays a crucial role in the modernization of India's border management. It enhances surveillance, communication, and data analysis, ultimately strengthening national security and border

control. This empowerment results in the implementation of more efficient and effective measures to address emerging challenges and threats.

## **Conclusion**

To put it concisely, Ladakh's border security management presents complex and diverse challenges for national security. The rugged topography, harsh weather, and remote locations create logistical and operational hurdles for security forces. The enduring historical border disputes further complicate the situation, necessitating persistent diplomatic efforts to reach a lasting solution. The heightened military presence and neighboring countries' infrastructure development along the border have raised concerns about potential conflicts, highlighting the importance of ongoing vigilance and readiness to protect national security.

Additionally, it's vital to consider the cultural diversity and sensitivities of the local Ladakhi population when designing security strategies to ensure their well-being and cooperation. In summary, the effective management of Ladakh's borders requires a comprehensive approach that incorporates military strength, diplomacy, and engagement with the local communities. This is an ever-evolving situation that demands continuous assessment and adaptability to address emerging challenges, all with the ultimate objective of preserving peace and stability in the region.

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## Chapter 7

# Trade, Tensions, and Trust Deficits: Challenges in India's Approach towards Pakistan since 2014

Pradeep Kumar

Senior Research Fellow

Defence and Strategic Studies, University of Allahabad

### **Abstract:**

This research article delves into the dynamic landscape of India's foreign policy towards Pakistan since 2014, examining the key shifts, challenges, and strategic considerations that have shaped bilateral relations between the two South Asian neighbors. The time frame chosen is significant, as it marks the beginning of the tenure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose leadership has witnessed both continuity and transformation in India's approach towards Pakistan. The study employs a multidimensional analytical framework, incorporating diplomatic, political, economic, and security perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the bilateral dynamics.

### **Introduction:**

India's foreign policy towards Pakistan has been a subject of persistent interest, particularly since the turn of the millennium. The period since 2014, coinciding with the inauguration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, has witnessed a nuanced evolution in the diplomatic engagements between the two South Asian neighbors. Against a backdrop of historical animosities, security concerns, and geopolitical complexities, this study endeavors to dissect the intricacies of India's foreign policy towards Pakistan during this critical period.

The India-Pakistan relationship is characterized by a tumultuous history, marked by conflicts, territorial disputes, and a complex web of cultural and historical ties. The two nations, having gained independence in 1947, share not only geographic proximity but also a legacy of partition that has profoundly shaped their diplomatic interactions. The period before 2014 saw a mix of attempts at dialogue, occasional thawing of relations, and persistent challenges, reflecting the deeply rooted complexities in their bilateral ties.

This article aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of India's foreign policy towards Pakistan since 2014, a period marked by significant geopolitical shifts and leadership changes, unpacking the diplomatic strategies and initiatives that have either persisted or undergone transformation under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, examining the hurdles and prospects that have defined the bilateral relationship, with a focus on security, diplomatic, and economic dimensions and investigating how the India-Pakistan relationship has influenced broader regional stability and the role of major global actors in mediating or exacerbating tensions.

### **Historical Context:**

The India-Pakistan relationship is deeply rooted in a complex historical narrative that has shaped the geopolitical landscape of South Asia. Understanding the historical context is crucial for deciphering the intricacies of India's foreign policy towards Pakistan since 2014.

The partition of British India in 1947 led to the creation of two independent nations, India and Pakistan. This seismic event resulted in widespread violence, mass migrations, and the establishment of contentious borders. The Kashmir region emerged as a major flashpoint, with both nations staking claim to the territory. The Kashmir conflict, unresolved since the partition, has been a persistent source of tension and military confrontation. The Indo-Pakistani wars of 1947, 1965, and 1971, along with numerous crises, have left an indelible mark on the relationship. The 1971 war led to the creation of Bangladesh and further strained bilateral ties.

Both India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1998, altering the strategic calculus in the region. The nuclear factor added a layer of complexity to the relationship, leading to global concerns about stability and security. The Kargil conflict underscored the potential for military escalation and the fragility of the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir. International mediation, particularly by the United States, played a role in defusing the crisis. Despite historical animosities, there have been periodic attempts at diplomatic dialogue. Agreements like the Tashkent Agreement (1966) and the Simla Agreement (1972) sought to normalize relations, emphasizing the importance of bilateral solutions to outstanding issues.

The historical context sets the stage for analyzing India's foreign policy towards Pakistan since 2014. The persisting Kashmir conflict, nuclearization, and a history of wars and crises create a complex backdrop against which diplomatic engagements unfold. As we delve

into the subsequent sections of this study, it is imperative to recognize how historical legacies continue to influence contemporary foreign policy decisions and bilateral dynamics.

### **Modi's Leadership and Foreign Policy:**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office in May 2014, bringing with him a distinct leadership style and a vision for India's role on the global stage. His approach to foreign policy, including relations with Pakistan, has been characterized by a blend of continuity and transformative elements.

#### **Continuities:**

- Modi's administration continued the tradition of diplomatic engagement with Pakistan. Despite the historical challenges, efforts were made to maintain dialogue channels, reflecting the acknowledgment of the significance of stable regional relations.
- The emphasis on economic cooperation as a tool for fostering ties continued. Economic linkages, trade, and people-to-people contacts were viewed as avenues for building mutual understanding and trust.
- Modi's foreign policy maintained a focus on active participation in multilateral forums. This approach aimed to position India as a key player on the global stage while addressing regional issues through diplomatic means.

#### **Transformative Elements:**

- One of the notable aspects of Modi's foreign policy was its proactive nature. The administration sought to redefine India's global image by engaging with major powers, enhancing economic partnerships, and projecting a more assertive stance on key international issues.
- While engaging with the international community, Modi's "Neighborhood First" policy sought to strengthen ties with neighboring countries, recognizing the importance of regional stability. However, this approach faced challenges in the context of India-Pakistan relations.

Modi's leadership demonstrated a balancing act between continuity and change. While upholding traditional foreign policy principles, there was a notable shift towards more assertive and pragmatic approach in dealing with strategic challenges. The proactive and assertive elements, coupled with a commitment to continuity in diplomatic engagements,

provide a backdrop for understanding the evolving dynamics in the India-Pakistan relationship.

### **Challenges in India-Pakistan Relations:**

The India-Pakistan relationship has been loaded with challenges, reflecting historical animosities, territorial disputes, and complex geopolitical dynamics. Since 2014, several key challenges have shaped and strained bilateral relations, contributing to a difficult diplomatic landscape.

- Persistent allegations of cross-border terrorism have been a central challenge. India has accused Pakistan of supporting and harboring terrorist groups responsible for attacks within India, leading to a recurrent cycle of tensions and diplomatic standoffs.
- Violations of the Line of Control in Kashmir have escalated, resulting in military confrontations and heightened security concerns. Ceasefire violations and skirmishes along the LoC have strained efforts to maintain stability in the region.
- Despite intermittent attempts at dialogue, sustained diplomatic breakthroughs have proven elusive. Peace initiatives, such as the Composite Dialogue Process, have faced setbacks, with issues like the Kashmir dispute remaining deeply entrenched.
- Economic ties between India and Pakistan have been adversely affected by diplomatic tensions. Trade disruptions and restrictions, including the suspension of Most Favored Nation (MFN) status (in the aftermath of the Pulwama attack in 2019, India withdrew the Most Favored Nation status granted to Pakistan. This move allowed India to impose higher tariffs on Pakistani imports, disrupting the normal flow of trade between the two countries); have hindered the potential for economic cooperation and people-to-people contacts.
- Disputes over the sharing of water resources, particularly related to the Indus Waters Treaty, have added another layer of complexity. Water-related issues have the potential to escalate tensions and impact the livelihoods of communities on both sides.
- The construction of hydropower projects by India in the Indus River basin has been a source of contention. While India maintains that these projects adhere to the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty, Pakistan has raised concerns about their potential impact on water availability.

- Both nations have engaged in military posturing, leading to concerns of an arms race in the region. The nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan add a heightened sense of urgency to efforts aimed at maintaining strategic stability.
- The use of proxy groups by both countries as a tool of statecraft has added an unconventional dimension to the security challenges. Proxy warfare has complicated efforts to establish trust and transparency in bilateral relations.

The challenges in India-Pakistan relations since 2014 reflect a complex interplay of security concerns, diplomatic impasses, economic considerations, and military posturing. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced and multi-pronged approach, encompassing diplomatic dialogue, confidence-building measures, and regional cooperation. As we move forward in this analysis, exploring the economic and geopolitical implications of these challenges will provide further insights into the evolving dynamics of this crucial bilateral relationship.

### **Challenges in Diplomatic Engagements:**

Diplomatic engagements between India and Pakistan have encountered numerous impasses since 2014, reflecting the deep-seated challenges and historical complexities in their relationship. Despite sporadic attempts at dialogue, sustained diplomatic breakthroughs have proven elusive, giving rise to a series of setbacks and frustrations.

- **Composite Dialogue Process:** In 1997 India and Pakistan agreed to have a "Composite Dialogue" instead of issue-specific negotiations, which encompassed various tracks of bilateral engagement, faced challenges and was eventually stalled in 2014-15. Issues such as the Kashmir dispute, cross-border terrorism, and conflicting regional priorities hindered progress. The inability to find common ground on these fundamental issues contributed to the breakdown of the dialogue.
- **Pathankot Attack (2016):** The terrorist attack on the Pathankot airbase in 2016 further strained diplomatic ties. India accused Pakistan-based militants of orchestrating the attack, leading to a suspension of the Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue that was initiated in December 2015.
- **Uri Attack (2016):** In the aftermath of the Uri attack, where militants targeted an Indian army base, diplomatic tensions escalated. India blamed Pakistan for supporting the perpetrators,

resulting in heightened hostilities and a renewed impasse in diplomatic channels.

- **Kashmir as a Stumbling Block:** The longstanding Kashmir dispute remains a primary stumbling block in diplomatic dialogues. Divergent perspectives on the status of Kashmir and the absence of a mutually agreeable framework for resolution have impeded progress in bilateral discussions.

Diplomatic impasses in India-Pakistan relations underscore the need for innovative and sustained efforts to overcome historical challenges. A comprehensive and incremental approach, addressing core issues and building trust through various means, is crucial for breaking the cycle of diplomatic setbacks and fostering a more constructive bilateral relationship. As we delve further into economic considerations and regional implications, understanding the diplomatic challenges will be pivotal in formulating a holistic analysis of the evolving dynamics since 2014.

### **Economic Considerations in India-Pakistan Relations:**

Economic ties between India and Pakistan have been influenced by the broader geopolitical context and diplomatic relations. While economic cooperation has the potential to foster mutual benefits, it has also been subject to disruptions and challenges.

- Cross-border trade, including the trade through the Wagah-Attari border and the Uri-Muzaffarabad route, has faced disruptions due to political tensions. Such disruptions have adverse effects on businesses and traders on both sides of the border.
- Economic cooperation can serve as a conduit for people-to-people contacts, fostering understanding and goodwill. Initiatives that encourage cross-border investments, joint ventures, and cultural exchanges have the potential to bridge gaps and build trust.
- Both nations are part of regional economic organizations such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Enhanced economic cooperation within such frameworks can contribute to regional stability and development.
- Economic cooperation can serve as a tool for soft power diplomacy. Collaborative projects, joint ventures, and economic partnerships contribute to a positive narrative, potentially influencing public perceptions and attitudes on both sides.

The resumption and normalization of trade relations could provide a platform for sustained diplomatic engagement. Trade diplomacy can be

leveraged to build bridges, resolve disputes, and create a more conducive environment for broader diplomatic discussions.

### **Regional Implications of India-Pakistan Relations:**

The dynamics between India and Pakistan have far-reaching implications not only for the two nations but also for the broader South Asian region and the global geopolitical landscape. India and Pakistan, as the two largest nations in South Asia, exert significant influence on the regional stability of the subcontinent. Tensions between them can have spillover effects, affecting neighboring countries and regional security dynamics. Ongoing security concerns, particularly related to the Kashmir conflict, have implications for regional stability. The potential for military escalation and cross-border terrorism impacts the security calculus not only for India and Pakistan but also for neighboring countries.

Resolving tensions between India and Pakistan could unlock the economic potential of the South Asian region. Enhanced connectivity, trade routes, and economic cooperation have the potential to positively impact the economies of both nations and contribute to regional development. A stable and cooperative relationship between India and Pakistan could attract foreign investment and promote economic development in the region. The positive economic impact may extend beyond national borders, fostering a more prosperous South Asia.

India-Pakistan relations have wide-ranging implications, from regional stability to global security dynamics. The interplay between these two nations influences the strategic balance in South Asia and engages major global powers in diplomatic efforts. As we conclude this analysis, recognizing the broader regional and global dimensions is essential for understanding the significance of developments in India-Pakistan relations since 2014. The pursuit of peace and stability in the region requires a concerted effort from both nations, supported by the international community.

### **Conclusion:**

The analysis of India's foreign policy towards Pakistan since 2014 reveals a complex interplay of historical legacies, diplomatic challenges, security concerns, economic considerations, and regional and global implications. As we reflect on the key findings, several overarching themes emerge, shaping the trajectory of the bilateral relationship. As we look ahead, the realization of a stable and cooperative India-Pakistan relationship necessitates strategic initiatives on multiple fronts:

- Sustained diplomatic dialogue, backed by confidence-building measures, remains paramount for addressing core issues and building trust incrementally.
- Resumption and normalization of economic ties can serve as a catalyst for broader diplomatic engagement, fostering mutual benefits and regional prosperity.
- Leveraging regional and global forums, including the United Nations and multilateral organizations, can facilitate international support for conflict resolution and peace-building efforts.
- Resuscitating diplomatic channels are essential for overcoming impasses. A renewed commitment to dialogue, backed by confidence-building measures, could pave the way for addressing core issues and building trust.
- Track II diplomatic initiatives, involving non-governmental actors, could provide a platform for informal discussions and confidence-building measures. These initiatives can foster dialogue outside the constraints of official channels.
- Given the deep-rooted mistrust, a step-by-step approach to building trust is crucial. Confidence-building measures, such as cultural exchanges, joint economic projects, and cooperation on non-security issues, can contribute to a more conducive diplomatic environment.

In conclusion, the complex situation of India-Pakistan relations requires a commitment to diplomatic ingenuity, regional cooperation, and international collaboration. While challenges persist, the potential for transformative breakthroughs remains, offering hope for a future marked by stability, cooperation, and shared prosperity in the South Asian region.

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## Chapter 8

### The Chinese Military: An overview

Abhishek Pandey (JRF)

Defence and Strategic Studies,

University of Allahabad

**Abstract:** With the independence of India and China in late 1940s, the two most populated states in the world became significant players in the regional politics. With the time both countries had locked horns on various border disputes. With the rise of Chinese military, the security considerations for India has also increased. This article discusses the structure and strength of Chinese Military in details so as to understand the challenge India may face with Chinese military.

**Keyword:** PLA, CPC (Communist Party of China), Missiles, Nuclear arsenal.

#### Introduction

Almost everyone is familiar with the tradition of having an army for a nation, but it seems rare for a political party. However, China's people's liberation Army (PLA) is an exception because China's PLA is totally loyal to Chinese communist party. It was in the December 1929 during the 9th summit of Chinese communist party in Gutiyuan of the Fujian province, when Mao-Tse- Gung clarified that the "Red Army (Now PLA) is mainly used to serve a political purpose".

It is interesting to note that, after 85 years at the same place (Gutiyuan), during his address at 'military political work conference', the Chinese president Xi Jinping Calls "PLA, the army of the Communist party of China" and that its must maintain full loyalty to its political leadership.

The roots of PLA are connected with August 1927 Nanchung uprising. In this movement Mao Tse-Tung, Zhou Enlai and Zhu D Ross rose up against the nationalist forces. In 1949 they make communist revolution successful and play a key role in the Chinese Communist Party coming to power. Mao Tse-Tung and Deng Xioping has led PLA gloriously and under their superior command for almost half a century.

#### **The Chinese political system has two major wings:**

1. Communist party of China (CPC)
2. Peoples liberation Army (PLA)

Apart from this two major wings of CPC i.e. the Politburo & Central Committee. Two out of 25 members in Politburo and around 18 to 20% of Central Committee members (205 permanent & 171 optional) are from PLA. Central committee selects the Politburo. The Politburo standing committee is the nation's top political organization and it has 7 members.

Central Military Commission, a commission of PLA top officials is the China's top military body and PLA commander in chief is the chairman of CMC and PLA Senior officer is the member of CPC.

The below flow chart told about the working mechanism of People's Republic of China (PRC). And its shows the cooperation and coordination between Military, Party and Government of PRC.

## **PARALLEL HIERARCHIES IN CHINA**

### **The PLA's Strategies:**

China has been a supporter of expansionist policy from the very beginning. China is the only country in the whole world that shares its border with 14 countries but it has territorial disputes also with more than

18 countries. To promote this expansionist policy, China adopts the following strategy;

### **Strategy of Five Fingers:**

This concept of China is very old and is an important dimension of Chinese foreign policy. This strategy was created by China's popular leader Mao Zedong. Under this strategy, China considers Tibet as its right palm and Ladakh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh as its fingers and it is seen as China's responsibility to liberate these areas. After observing this policy, it seems that why China attaches so much importance to it. The most important part of this policy is Tibet, which China considers very important from a strategic point of view as it appears as a gateway for China to enter in South Asia directly and in 1950 China also took this region forcibly, and many more example are there. The 2017 Doklam Stand-off, 2020 Galwan face-off and recent China's occupation of a Nepali village Rui Gaon on Gorkh district are just tip of the iceberg of China's military aggression in the five fingers Himalayan regions. And China claims Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh which it considered as part of Aksai Chin.

Although this strategy was not discussed in the official document of China. But many time it was told by Provisional mouthpiece magazine of China's communist Party. And the Claim over Five

fingers were asserted frequently from 1959 to 1961 over radio system in Beijing & Lhasa many times.

**String of Pearls:**

This is a geopolitical hypothesis of China; through which it wants to encircle India from all sides through this policy. China takes some strategic ports of India's neighboring countries on lease and develops them. For example, China has taken on lease Chittagong Port of Bangladesh, Gwadar Port of Pakistan for 40 years and development of Colombo and Hambantota Port of Sri Lanka and sittwe Port of Myanmar etc. are examples of China's expansionist policy. India's security is definitely affected by this policy of China. Many scholars see China's String of pearls policy as an answer to India's Look east policy. For the first time this policy was also brought to light by Political Research of United States in 2004, and India is adopting Necklace of diamond policy to counter this plan.

**China's debt-trap Policy:**

Economically, China is a large part of the whole world. And taking advantage of its economic condition, China gives loans to all small, medium and poor countries. When those countries are unable to give that loan, then China takes advantage of their helplessness and takes possession of their strategic bases. China has made the basis of this policy especially in Asian and African countries. The surprising thing is that there are many countries who again take new loans from China to pay off the old debt. Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Myanmar are such countries which are forced to give their important and strategic locations to China in return for the loan taken from China. The Diplomacy of the debt trap was originally associated with the Indian academician Brahma Chellany who prompted the term in early 2017

**China's Salami Slicing Strategy:**

Under this policy, China makes its territorial claim on many small parts of a nation to give shape to its expansionist plan. Then it tries its best to capture it. After claiming many areas, he is also successful in getting rights over some areas. For example, there are many such areas in the South China Sea and in India also like galwan valley, Pangong Tso, Gogra, Hot springs, Demchok, Arunachal Pradesh etc. which China claims. This concept was introduced by the Hungarian Communist politician Matyas Rakosi in the 1940s. Salami slicing is also known as cabbage strategy in military parlance.

China's Gray zone conflict strategy alongside nibble and negotiate tactics.

### **Overview of the PLA:**

It is well known that China is the world's largest force in term of personnel and resources, and the second largest in terms of Budget allocation after the USA. Around 20 lakhs male & female employee continuously provide their services.

The Chinese forces divide into four services and two sub services forces. The four services are- 1. PLA Army 2. PLA Navy 3. PLA Air Force 4. PLA Rocket Force.

### **The two Sub services forces are:**

1. The strategic support force (which is responsible for cyber, electronic, information, space and counter space operations).
2. Joint logistics support force

In 2016 the Chinese people liberation army officially abandoned its decades- old 7 Military region replacing them with five theatre commands namely,

1. Eastern Theater Command cover Taiwan, Japan and East China Sea.
2. Western Theater Command cover largest geographical area-overseas the Xinjiang and Tibet autonomous regions, as well as the border with INDIA.
3. Southern Theater Command headquartered in Beijing, it protects the capital and support other theatre command.
4. Northern Theater Command include Korean Peninsula borders with Russia, Mangolia and Yellow sea.
5. Central Theater Command covers Beijing security to CCP leadership and support to others.

### **Modernization & Capabilities of PLA:**

The modernization drive of the China's Military system began in earnest in 1978 during the "reform and opening" period ushered by then-chinese leader Den Xiaoping. Reform and opening policies of PRC allowed it to increase its military spending. National defence was one of the most important aim among 4 aims established by Zhou Enlai. The other three were Agriculture, Industry and Science & Technology. All these aims of Zhou Enlai was fulfilled by Deng Xioping. Since the 1990s Chinas broad effort to transform the PLA from a heavy infantry, low technology ground forces centric military into a high technology networked force with an increasing emphasis on joint operation on naval and air power projection.

While Deng Xioping is considered as the father of Chinese military reforms & Xi Jinping has also made substantial reforms in order to

modernize the Chinese military. He wants to see PLA as worlds' strongest military organization in upcoming future.

### **PLA- Army:**

China has cut down approx 55% of its ground force since 1997, still the PLA army is largest ground force in the world. It is regarded as the primary force of China and is responsible to address the security interest of mainland China by protecting its territorial integrity, sovereignty etc. and also maintains the political and social stability of China. Disaster relief and evacuation is also the PLA army's responsibility in emergency scenario.

The type -15 Light battle tanks of PLA army are very popular these days and as considered as one of the important assets in the mountain warfare and particularly against the India aim at the Sino-Indian mountainous border. However, the Chinese main battle tanks are Type 96 A & Type 99.

### **PLA Navy:**

With about 350 battle force ships the Chinese People Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is one of the largest naval force in the world. Even the super-power like USA have 293 battle ship in their strength. The naval Aviation Branch, an assisting Branch of PLAN is fully equipped with Air-power assests.

Earlier, the PLAN primarily focuses on the coastal security of China and to expand it geopolitical interests also. But since 2000s the Chinese Navy (PLAN) started to make more efforts in modernizing itself. The PLAN's aim has expanded now from the coastal security to open seas ambitions. Particularly after Xi-Jinping coming to the power, Chinese maritime ambitions has taken a serious leap and now Chinese navy is aiming to become a "world class navy" by mid-century. In 2017 China has estd. its first foreign naval base at Djibouti in Africa continent.

### **Aircraft Carriers:**

PLAN have two aircraft carrier and manufacturing the third one at the moment. The first aircraft carrier of China is Liaoning and two second indigenous aircraft carrier named Shandong which was commissioned in 2019.

The are two other branches of Chinese Navy namely the China Coast Guard & Peoples Armed forces maritime Militia. The Chinese coast Guard is equipped by 130 large Patrol Ships, more than 70 fast Patrol combatants, more than 400 Coastal Patrol Craft and around 1000

inshore & riverine vessels this makes Chinese coast guard among the world's best.

### **PLA Air force:**

The Chinese Airforce is largest in Asia & 3rd Largest in world. The Chinese Airforce developed gradually overtime according to the Chinese requirement. The Strategist and leaders of PLA wants to turn the Chinese Airforce into a "Strategic Airfore" which shall enhance the capabilities of PLA Airforce. According to the 2019 Defence white paper.

China is trying to integrate their Air & Space capacities in order to make them more offensive & defensive simultaneously using the best technological and scientific support. They are enhancing their strategic early warning airborne system, Missile Defence & information awareness so as to make modern Airforce which is capable to fight aerial war.

At the start of 2000s, the Chinese Airforce was considered as weak-line into its security. But today the PLA Airforce has more than 800 fourth generation fighter Aircrafts like J-10, J-11, J-16 etc. and the fifth generation J-20 stealth fighters also. There are around 950 Bomber attack aircraft, including the most advanced one like H-6K, which are Capable of launching 6 land attack Cruise missile simultaneously. PLA Airforce also have the Russian S-400 surface to Air missile Defence system which make Chinese security impentratable.

### **PLA Rocket Force:**

PLARF is responsible to control and operates the Chinese strategic land based nuclear & conventional missile system. PLARF is probably even responsible for warhead management of all other services. PLA uses its rocket force as nuclear deterrence. The PLARF is also known as the second Artillery of the China.

Xi-Jinping Called out PARF as necessary force to maintain Chinese strategic deterrence. The PLA is continuously enhancing the range accuracy and lethality of its missiles continuously. By the mid of 1990 the China have a very small range of Ballistic Missile. But in 2019 review, the Chinese Ballistic Missile development programme is considered as one of the most active & sophisticated programme in the world.

### **The sub-services forces of PLA:**

Among the major reforms in Chinese forces, the establishment of PLA strategic support force & PLA Joint logistic support force in 2015 & 2016 respectively. These forces are responsible to provide electronic, space, cyber, psychological and logistic support to all other wings of PLA.

### **Conclusion:**

The Development of PLA over the various time period have been discussed above along with the potential/capabilities the various wing of PLA possess at the moment. The strategies employed by the Chinese policy maker against its rivals has also been discussed. So after analyzing the whole paradigm around the maniacal development of Chinese army in all its wings forces. India needs to re-think its Chinese policy and act rationally and more pro- actively against the China.

Particularly after the rise of Xi Jinping to the power, the dragons posture has been even more aggressive than before which is very much evident with the Doklam & Galwan Crisis, and therefore, New Delhi is required to act more rationally and in the similar fashion against the PLAs actions. Apart from the land borders the PLA is also challenging India in maritime arena and poses threat to India's maritime security interest. Therefore, India needs to form various alliances with regional & Global power in order to resist Chinese superiority through various military/naval exercises, Humanitarian activities etc. in the region.

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## Chapter 9

### Blue Economy: Policy for India

Ratnesh Kumar

(Research Scholar)

Department of Defence and Strategic studies

University of Allahabad, Prayagraj

#### **Abstract:**

The concept of the Blue Economy emerged during the Rio+20 preparatory meeting in the 21st century, with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) asserting that a "Green Economy" had limited relevance for them. Instead, they proposed the idea of a "Blue Economy" as more suitable for sustainable development and ocean resource management. Despite being in an evolving stage with no comprehensive definition, the Blue Economy encompasses marine, coastal, and ocean economies.

In the Indian context, the Blue Economy extends beyond economic and environmental dimensions, presenting a unique opportunity for connectivity with neighboring states, fulfilling national objectives, and enhancing security. With India being the second most populous country globally, the model addresses critical issues such as unemployment, poverty, food and water security, energy security, and environmental concerns.

India's extensive coastline, numerous islands, and vast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) highlight the strategic importance of the oceans. The "SAGAR-MALA" initiative emphasizes the Indian Ocean's significance for security and growth in the region. Oceans, covering two-thirds of the Earth's surface, play a vital role in poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihoods, food production, climate regulation, and international trade.

The Blue Economy concept, introduced by Professor Gunter Pauli in 1994, gained prominence after the Rio+20 conference. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 further underscored the need to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas, and marine resources. Countries like Australia, Brazil, the United Kingdom, the United States, Russia, and Norway have implemented national ocean policies with measurable outcomes.

India's working definition of the Blue Economy focuses on exploring and optimizing ocean potential for socio-economic development while preserving ocean health. Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasizes its role in coastal and island territories' development, marine research, eco-friendly technology, and fisheries. Admiral Sunil Lamba defines it as marine-based economic development improving human well-being while reducing environmental risks.

In conclusion, the Blue Economy concept is integral to India's pursuit of sustainable development, offering a comprehensive approach to ocean activities. The multi-faceted definitions reflect the diverse perspectives and goals associated with this evolving paradigm, emphasizing efficiency, equity, and sustainability in utilizing marine resources.

### **Introduction**

In 21st century the idea of blue economy was argued during the Rio+20 preparatory meeting where several small Island Developing States (SIDS) observed that. Green economy had limited relevance for them. Instead Green economy in a blue world was a good concept and most suitable for the sustainable development and management of ocean Resources.

The concept of blue economy is still at an evolving stage where there is yet to be any comprehensive definition which would be appropriate from the operational point of view. The Blue economy is known as marine economy green economy, coastal economy etc. at the United Nations Conference on World Sustainable Development in Rio-de-Janeiro in 2012 blue economy was viewed as ocean economy. The goal of blue economy is improvement of human well-being and social equality while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities at its core the ocean economy refers to the decoupling of socio-economic development from environmental degradation. In this regard efficiency and optimisation of natural marine resources within ecological limits becomes paramount.

From Indian context blue economy extends to beyond only existence of economic and environment offer. It is very useful and unique opportunity and connectivity to neighbour states and fulfil national objective and maintaining India's security. In the current scenario India is second largest population country in the world. And there are a lot of problems facing India's people like poverty food security water security energy security and environmental security in these problems.

the most relevant problem is unemployment. for which the blue economy model can discharge its role.

India's 90% Trade by volume and almost all oil imports pass through the sea. We have a coastline 7516.6 Km long 1300 island and an EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) of 2.4 million Square Kilometres. The priority that India attaches to the Indian ocean was set out in the Prime Minister's vision in March 2015 through the acronym SAGAR-MALA security and growth for all in the Region in which the Indian ocean is a body of water that has connected the littoral states through history and has also been the highway to collective prosperity. Humanity's relationship with the oceans, and how people use and exploit their resources is evolving in important ways. While the oceans are increasingly becoming a source of food, energy and products such as medicines and enzymes. There is also now a better understanding of the non-market good and services that the oceans provide which are vital for life on Earth. People also understand that the oceans are not limitless and that they are suffering from increasing and often communicative human imparts. Ocean that are not healthy and resident are not able to support economic growth. The fact that Oceans and seas matter for sustainable development is undeniable, oceans and Seas cover two-thirds of Earth's surface. Contribute to Poverty reallocation by creating sustainable livelihoods and decent work provide food and minerals generate oxygen. It absorbs greenhouse gases and mitigate the imparts of climate change, determine weather patterns and temperature and serve as Highways for seaborne international trade, with an estimated 80 percent of the volume of world trade carried by sea international shipping and fonts provide crucial linkages in global supply chains and are essential for the ability of all countries to gain access to global markets (UNCTAD 2016). The "Blue economy" concept seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion and preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainably. It's refers to the decoupling of socioeconomic development through oceans related Sectors and activities from environmental and ecosystem degradation challenges in the sustainable use of marine resources such as the imparts of climate change in the form of rising sea levels, increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events, and rising temperatures are going to have direct and indirect imparts on oceans related sectors such as fisheries aquaculture, and tourism and on marine transport

infrastructure such as ports with broad implications for international trade and for the development prospects of the most vulnerable nation, in particular coastal Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing states (SIDs).

### **Concepts of Blue Economy**

The economic philosophy of the blue economy was first introduced in 1994 by Professor Gunter Pauli at the United Nations University (UNU) to reflect the needs of future growth and prosperity, along with the threats posed by global warming. The concept was based on developing more sustainable models of development including concepts of engineering based on “no waste and no emissions After the Third Earth Summit Conference-Rio+20 in 2012, the blue economy assumed greater importance. The concept of blue economy received more thrust when the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 sought to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development as a guiding principle for global governance and use of ocean resources Countries such as Australia, Brazil, the United Kingdom, the United States, Russia, and Norway have developed dedicated national ocean policies with measurable outcomes and budgetary provisions. Countries such as Canada and Australia have even enacted legislation. The definition of blue economy is multi-faceted and not a single definition suffices the coverage of blue economy in its entirety. Considering pros and cons of different definitions. India has developed a working definition of Blue Economy as: “Blue economy refers to exploring and optimizing the potential of the oceans and seas which are under India’s legal jurisdiction for socio-economic development while preserving the health of the oceans,” Definition of blue economy by India is comprehensive in the sense that it covers many dimensions of the ocean activities.

### **Defining Blue Economy:**

The concept of Blue Economy is still at an evolving stage where there is yet to be any comprehensive definition which would be appropriate from operational point of view. ‘Blue Economy’ has been used synonymous to ‘marine economy’ ‘coastal economy’ ‘ocean economy’ etc. while the basic concepts and goals of these competing paradigms are more or less similar, there are basic differences in approaches and treatment of various elements such as resources management, growth objective sustainability and social equality.

According to the prime minister of India Narendra Modi “blue economy is an essential part of this pursuit in the development of India’s coastal and island territories strengthening our marine research development of eco-friendly marine industrial and technology base and fisheries are other elements of our goal”.

According to the Admiral Sunil Lamba former chief of the naval staffs and chief of staff’s committee at a maritime power conference 2017 (organised by national maritime foundation new Delhi) “marine based economic development that leads to improved human wellbeing and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities”

According to The World Bank “The Blue economy is the “Sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth improved livelihood and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem”.

At United Nations conference on sustainable development held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. Blue Economy was viewed as ocean Economy that aim at the “Improvement of human well being and social equality while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. The ocean economy refers to the de-coupling of socio economic development from environmental degradation. In this regards, efficiency and optimization of natural marine resources within ecological limits become paramount.”

The Government of Australia in its report title “Marine Nation 2025: marine Science to support Australia Blue Economy defines that “The Blue economy is one in which our oceans ecosystems brings economic and social benefits that are efficient, equitable and sustainable”.

The European commission in 2012 has defined the concept of blue economy as “all economic activities related to the oceans, seas and coasts This includes the closest direct and indirect supporting activities necessary for the functioning of these economic sectors which can be located anywhere including in land locked countries”

The commonwealth blue economy paper (2016) explains it as one that can maximize the economic value of the marine environment in a sustainable manner that presences and protects the seas resources and ecosystem. By that explanation the blue economy can be broadly defined to include economic activity which directly or indirectly uses the sea as an input. (in January 2014, the participants of blue economy summit adopted the Abu Dhabi declaration which describes it as; conserve and sustainably use the oceans seas and marine resources for

sustainability use the oceans seas and marine resources for sustainable development) A United Nations representative recently defined the blue economy as an economy that “comprises a range of economic section and related policies that together determine whether the use of ocean resources is sustainable. An important challenges of the blue economy is to understand and better manage the many aspects of oceanic sustainability ranging from sustainable management of ocean resources will require collaboration across borders and sectors through a variety of partnership and a scale that has not been previously achieved this is a tall order particularly for Small island developing states (SIDS). And least development countries (LDCs) who face significantly limitation”.

Research and Information System (RIS) for Developing Countries, in its report, Prospects of Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean, has also acknowledged that the Blue Economy should include all the water bodies including fresh water bodies. A part of the RIS report reads as follows:

The blue economy paradigm puts emphasis on the term ‘blue’ which primarily refers to water. In that perspective, the coverage of blue economy can be expanded to all water-bodies and water- related activities over the land and in the seas within the sovereign jurisdiction of a country Logically, the whole range of activities involving fresh as well as marine water would comprise blue economy for any typical economy-blue economy activities are deeply entrenched into almost all sectors of an economy.

According the Indian experts- A sustainable ocean economic activity is in balance with the long term capacity of ocean ecosystems to support this activity and remain resilient and healthy”.

Central government think-tank NITI Aayog has coined its own definition of “blue economy” for the Indian context, which would include “the entire system of ocean resources and manmade economic infrastructure in marine, maritime and offshore coastal zones within India’s legal jurisdiction, which aid in the production of goods and services and have clear linkages with economic growth and environmental sustainability and national security”.

### **Blue Economy Policy for India**

India’s blue economy is understood as a subset of the national economy comprising an entire ocean resources system and human-made economic infrastructure in marine, maritime, and onshore coastal zones within the country’s legal jurisdiction. It aids the

production of goods and services that have clear linkages with economic growth, environmental sustainability, and national security. The blue economy is a vast socio-economic opportunity for coastal nations like India to utilize ocean resources for societal benefit responsibly.

Oceans cover 72% of the surface of our blue planet and communicate more than 95% of the Biosphere life originated in the oceans and they continue to support all life today by generating oxygen. Observing carbon dioxide, recycling nutrients and regulating global climate and temperature oceans provide a sustainable portion of the global population with food and livelihoods and are the means of transport for 80% of global trade. The seabed currently provides 32% of the global supply of hydrocarbons with exploration expanding. Advancing Technologies are opening new frontiers of marine resources development from bio-prospering to the mining of seabed mineral resources the sea also offers vast potential for renewable “Blue energy” Production from wind tidal thermal and biomass sources.

The Blue Economy introduced by Gunter Pauli in his 2010 book, the Blue Economy 10 years- 100 innovative. 100 Million Jobs has opened new avenues for bilateral and multilateral work involving the environment energy, Defence and food production, the Blue economy as distinct from the Blue water economy encompasses in it the “green economy” with the focus on the environment, and the “ocean economy” or “coastal economy” with its emphasis on complementarities among coastal and island states for sustenance and sustainable development. The newly set up blue Economy strategic thought from India Under the auspices of the National maritime foundation, has already envisaged the multiple ways in which the blue economy.

The draft Blue Economy policy framework envisages the optimal utilization of all sectors of the maritime domain, (living, non-living resources, tourism, ocean energy, etc.) for sustainable development of coastal areas.

The essential components of the Blue Economy Policy will cover eight different areas. They are:

- A National Accounting Framework for the Blue Economy,
- An Environmentally Sustainable National Coastal Marine Spatial Planning Framework,
- A vision to Develop Marine Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Fish Processing,



- A vision to enhance domestic manufacturing, emerging industries, trade, tourism, technology, services and skill development,
- An Integrated Plan for Developing Logistics Infrastructure, and Shipping,
- A Framework for Coastal and Deep-sea mining, New and Renewable Off-shore Energy and Research and Development,
- An Integrated Framework for Ocean Security, Strategic Dimensions, and International Engagements, and
- Ocean Governance.

### **The Sagarmala Programme**

The Sagarmala programme is the flagship programme of the Ministry of Shipping to promote port-led development in the country through harnessing India's 7,500 km long coastline, 14,500 km of potentially navigable waterways and strategic location on key international maritime trade routes. The main vision of the Sagarmala Programme is to reduce logistics cost for EXIM and domestic trade with minimal infrastructure investment.

Sagarmala Programme was approved by the Union Cabinet in March 2015 and a National Perspective Plan was prepared by the Ministry of Shipping which was released on 14th April 2016. As of now, 500 projects have been identified at an estimated infrastructure investment of Rs. 3.55 Lac Crore across all the pillars. Out of these, 143 projects (worth Rs. 0.88 Lac Crore) have been completed, and 190 projects (worth Rs. 2.12 Lac Crore) are already under implementation. Remaining set of 167 projects are under various stages of development and expected completion are well within 2035.

#### **14 Coastal Economic Zones being developed under Sagarmala**

For promoting port-led industrialization, 14 Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs) covering all the Maritime States and Union Territories have been identified as part of the National Perspective Plan under the Sagarmala

Programme. The Perspective Plans for all 14 CEZs have been prepared in consultation with relevant State Governments and Central Ministries.

#### **Blue water Navy**

India gives priority blue water Navy in 2007. Blue water navy is a Maritime force capable of opening globally essentially across the deep waters of open oceans. While definitions of what actually

constitutes such a force vary there is a requirement for the ability to exercise sea control at wide ranges.

### **Marine Pollution**

Marine pollution occurs when substances used or spread by humans, such as industrial, agricultural and residential waste, particles, noise, excess carbon dioxide or invasive organisms enter the ocean and cause harmful effects there. The majority of this waste (80%) comes from land-based activity, although marine transportation significantly contributes as well.

Sea water is continuously getting polluted in the form of excess nutrients from untreated sewerage, agricultural runoff, and marine debris such as plastics.

### **Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)**

Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), a regional cooperation initiative of the Indian Ocean Rim countries, was established in Mauritius in March 1997 with the aim of promoting economic and technical cooperation, including expansion of trade and investment. The IOR-ARC Secretariat is located at Port Louis, Mauritius.

India is one of the founder members of IOR-ARC. The Indian Ocean Rim, a heterogeneous area with a wide diversity of languages, culture and religions, is linked to India's destiny by name. The countries are diverse in size, areas and economic strength. Many of the IOR countries are becoming globally competitive and are developing new capacities which can be jointly harnessed through regional cooperation efforts. It has abundant human resources and technological capabilities.

The IORA Secretariat has identified the following six priority pillars in the blue economy as were recommended by the Council of Ministers' meeting (COMM) and revised by the Secretariat in consultation with Member States:

Fisheries and Aquaculture Renewable Ocean Energy Seaports and Shipping Offshore Hydrocarbons and Seabed Minerals Marine Biotechnology, Research and Development Tourism.

### **Matsya Sampada Yojana:**

Matsya Sampada Yojana was launched by Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 10 September 2020. It is a flagship scheme for focused and sustainable development of the fisheries sector in the country.

It will bring about the Blue Revolution by harnessing of fisheries potential in a sustainable, responsible, inclusive and equitable manner.

PMMSY shall bring about Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of the fisheries sector in India at a total investment of ₹ 20,050 crore for holistic development of the fisheries sector including the welfare of fishers. PMMSY is implemented in all the States and Union Territories for a period of five years from FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25. In the Union Budget 2023-24, a new sub-scheme under the PMMSY has been announced with an investment of Rs. 6,000 crores to enable activities of fish vendors, fishermen, and micro and small enterprises for improving value chain efficiencies and expanding the market.

### **Polymetallic Nodules Programme**

India's Polymetallic Nodules programme is oriented towards exploration and development of technologies for harnessing of nodules from the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) allocated to India. It has 4 components viz. Survey & Exploration, Environmental Impact Assessment, Technology Development (Mining), and Technology Development (Metallurgy). In the 75,000 sq. km area of CIOB, the estimated polymetallic nodule resource potential is 380 million tonnes, containing 4.7 million tonnes of nickel, 4.29 million tonnes of copper and 0.55 million tons of cobalt and 92.59 million tons of manganese. Cobalt and nickel are strategically important metals.

### **Challenges**

The potential to develop the blue economy is limited by a series of challenges. For much of human history, aquatic ecosystems have been viewed and treated as limitless resources and largely cost-free repositories of waste. These resources, however, are far from limitless, and the world is increasingly seeing the impacts of this approach. According to a document by the UN and World Bank, one challenge pertains to current economic trends, which are rapidly degrading ocean resources through “unsustainable extraction of marine resources, physical alterations and destruction of marine and coastal habitats and landscapes, climate change, and marine pollution”.

**Lack of Infrastructure:** There is a lack of ports, airports, and other infrastructure in many coastal areas of India, which can make it difficult to develop and expand economic activities in these regions.

Unplanned and unregulated development in the narrow coastal interface and nearshore areas has led to the marginalization of poor communities, and loss or degradation of critical habitats.

### **Climate Change**

Impacts of climate change, for example, in the form of both slow-onset events like sea-level rise and more intense and frequent weather events pose major challenges to Blue Economy. The changes in sea temperature, acidity, and major oceanic currents, among others, already threatening marine life, habitats, and the communities that depend on them.

### **Conclusion**

The blue economy presents a vital role and opportunity for India to grow its economy and create long-lasting and sustainable domestic industries. There will be many challenges ahead, but with the proper steps, the blue economy could give India some vital industries that propel its economy to increase.

The Indian Ocean region needs a sustainable and inclusive framework for international partnership. Countries in the region not only need to coordinate and manage the growing security challenges in the region, but also realize the substantial economic potential that exists in the Indian Ocean region. India has significantly increased its development efforts.

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## Chapter 10

### Importance of India's maritime neighbours

Aatish Kumar Saroj

(Research scholar)

Defense and Strategic Studies,  
University of Allahabad, Prayagraj.

**Abstract:**

This study examines the evolving geopolitical dynamics in the Indian Ocean region, with a focus on India and its maritime neighbors. Recent events, such as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and China's initiatives like the China-Indian Ocean Forum, have underscored the strategic significance of India's maritime linkages. China's increasing influence in the region, marked by initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the String of Pearls, raises concerns about India's security and its neighboring policy. Notably, China's actions, including sending a spy ship to Sri Lanka, further heighten tensions in the Indian Ocean.

The Indian Ocean, historically, geographically, and culturally interconnected, plays a crucial role in trade, energy, and security. With over 40% of global oil and gas reserves, the region's stability is paramount. However, challenges such as piracy, terrorism, and territorial disputes pose threats to the region's stability. The importance of India as a central player in the Indian Ocean cannot be overstated, as it plays a pivotal role in trade, energy, and security.

Examining specific cases, the paper delves into India's relations with neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. While India aims to foster cooperation and development, China's strategic interests, exemplified by debt-trap diplomacy, challenge India's influence in the region. The study emphasizes the significance of maritime security, economic cooperation, and diplomatic engagement to ensure stability and shared prosperity in the Indian Ocean region.

In conclusion, the research raises questions about the feasibility of achieving a shared vision for the Indian Ocean without India and its neighbors. The intricate web of geopolitical, economic, and strategic interests necessitates a collaborative approach to address common challenges and opportunities, ensuring a stable and prosperous future for the Indian Ocean region.

### ***Introduction***

The geopolitical environment of the Indian marine areas is significantly shaped by India's maritime neighbours. Recent events have highlighted the strategic significance of India's maritime linkages, impacting trade, security, and diplomatic relations, among other areas. In the contemporary changing geopolitical and strategic scenario, pandemic like Covid-19 has shaken the whole world. The impact of the uncertainties of Covid-19 has affected almost all formats on social, economic, political, technological, international relations etc. On the other hand, a few days ago, China organized a meeting of the China-Indian Ocean Forum, which was held in Kunming, Yunnan province of China. In which 19 countries participated, in which India's neighbors Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan also participated, but India was not invited in this meeting, due to which this new platform of China is again embroiled in controversies. China is trying to increase its interference in the Indian Ocean with all its strategies like BRI and STRING OF PEARLS and is completely encircling India, as well as taking advantage of the current situation, China has taken advantage of the countries of South Asia economically. Has tried to make India's neighboring countries in its favor by helping them, which is affecting India's neighbouring policy. Another glaring example was China sending Yuan Wang 5, a spy ship, to Sri Lanka's Hambantota port in the Indian Ocean in August 2022. Yuan Wang 5 had come to secretly collect India's secret information and it was also violating India's sovereignty in the maritime area. With so much turmoil happening in the Indian Ocean, can any shared vision be accomplished in the Indian Ocean without India and its neighboring countries?

The Indian Ocean region is a very exclusive ocean, in which India's location at the center makes it all the more important. This region is very important for India and its neighbouring countries. At present, India and its neighbouring countries in the Indian Ocean region are historically, geographically, politically, economically and culturally connected to each other. Due to the geographical and economic

importance of the Indian Ocean region, Europeans came here and ruled the entire region, that is why in the 20th century, the Indian Ocean was also called the British Lake. All the existing nations of the Indian Ocean region (except only Bhutan) were colonized by people from outside (Europe). All the nations of the Indian Ocean region have become independent at almost the same time period, perhaps that is why even at present there are equal challenges and opportunities for India and its neighbours. Social, economic, political, geographical, religious and cultural similarities and diversities exist between India and its neighbors located in the Indian Ocean. Presently this ocean and all the countries in this region are competing for trade and energy. The region is rich in natural resources with more than

40% oil and gas reserves. India plays the role of a center in the Indian Ocean region, no common concept can be completed without India in this region. India and its maritime neighbour have their own distinct importance in this region and all are connected to each other like a web. India imports more than 70% of its mineral oil and does 90% of its international trade from the Indian Ocean region only. India's maritime neighbours are Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, which are also connected by land border and Seychelles, Mauritius, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia are strategic and strategic countries for India in maritime neighbors without sharing land border. It is very important from the point of view, in all these, China, despite not being directly connected in the Indian Ocean region, is maintaining its presence and China remains a topic of discussion due to its misdeeds in the Indian Ocean. There are many small and big islands and countries in the Indian Ocean region, which, despite not being directly connected to India, are in the form of a maritime neighbour for India. The sea routes located in the Indian Ocean region that connect India and its neighbors from the Middle East to Africa to Europe and East Asia to North and South America. These sea routes are connected to each other by Suez Canal, Bab-almandeb Straits and Strait of Malacca. Pirates, terrorism, mutual disputes among the countries of the Indian Ocean region and gathering of military powers of foreign nations in this region are causing instability. When there was a bomb blast in Mumbai in 1993, the explosive material used in it was brought through the sea route, which was directly related to the terrorists of Pakistan. After that, the 26/11 attack in 2008 also took place through this sea route, from this



it can be inferred that terrorism in India and its neighbors is also increasing through sea route.

In 1947, both India and Pakistan became independent simultaneously, but at present both their foreign policy and domestic policies have completely changed. While Pakistan adopted Islamism in its law and military intervention in its rule, India adopted a constitution that established a secular and democratic republic. In its foreign policy, Pakistan joined groups like alliances and alliances, strengthened its relations with military alliances like SEATO and CENTO and removed itself from the policy of independence or neutrality and became a laggard of countries like America and China. The same India strengthened its foreign policy by adopting a policy of independence and neutrality and talked about taking its neighbors together, in view of which India adopted the Gujral principle in 1996 and the Neighbor First policy in 2005, in which India became a big country in South Asia. As a nation, it is a matter of taking care of our small neighbors and making cordial relations with them and giving our cooperation in their development.

Pakistan's aggression and military dictatorship led to the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, which became India's land and sea neighbour. India has improved its relations with Bangladesh, which was once a part of Pakistan, but currently India is completing projects in Bangladesh like rail link, inland waterways, transport routes, important infrastructure etc. The Chittagong port of Bangladesh is of great commercial and military importance and can also provide a way for India to gain access to the northeastern state.

On the other hand, Sri Lanka, located in the south of India, is a close maritime island neighbouring country, which is more important due to cultural, social, economic and security ties and close to the coastal border. From the point of view of China, Sri Lanka being an island located in the center of the Indian Ocean, is very important to surround India in the Indian Ocean, which is a threat to India's security. However, China has already trapped Sri Lanka in its debt trap and built Hambantota port. Taken on lease for 99 years. At present, Sri Lanka is facing an economic crisis due to discord in internal politics, due to which the basic needs of the people there are not being met.

Keeping in view the importance of Sri Lanka, in March 2022, the External Affairs Minister of India has finalized an MoU to set up hybrid power projects in the three islands of Jaffna Nainativu,

Neduntheevu and Analaitivu during his visit to Sri Lanka. India is increasing good relations with all its neighbours and China wants to reduce India's influence as the Indian Ocean is directly connected to the Indo-Pacific region. Since the Indian Ocean is a contribution to the international supply chain, China's trade and needs are also being met from this region, therefore it is screwing its diplomatic stakes on the islands and small countries of the region and increasing its naval capability and capabilities in the region. India is aggravating the situation, for which it is Investing more and more in important ports and infrastructure of these regions. China has already invested heavily in Pakistan's Gwadar port in the Arabian Sea and in infrastructure in the Maldives. China's first priority is to reduce India's influence in this region. China has made a strategy to encircle India by threatening India's security through BRI and STRING OF PEARLS, in which India's neighbors Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles have their access to the port and airport. Strengthening its penetration, China has a strategy to encircle China from the South China Sea to Malacca straight through the important strategic area of the Indian Ocean to the Arabian Gulf by modernizing the extensive military forces. On the other hand, Myanmar provides a route to the east for India to provide access to ASEAN countries, and at the same time China has private interests in Myanmar's Sitwe port, Koko Island and Kyakufu islands, which are directly connected to China. It is situated in the Bay of Bengal and the Bay of Bengal is the eastern maritime boundary for India. Myanmar is very important in terms of increasing security, trade and connectivity with the countries of the east. Due to the proximity of Maldives to India in the Indian Ocean and important sea routes of the world, its strategic importance increases due to the trade of minerals, energy and oil worth billions of dollars. The land location of Maldives can help India in controlling terrorist attacks through sea routes and combating pirates and also Maldives is a tourist destination. The proximity of Lakshadweep to all the islands of Maldives provides India a base for military operations, considering the proximity and importance of Maldives, India is investing heavily in various projects in Maldives such as the construction of a naval base at Uthuru Thila Phalhu. And has tied up to develop a National Defense Force Coastguard at Sifavaru. In Maldives, India organizes joint military exercises like Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and Milan along with sending aircraft for

patrolling. Peace and stability of Maldives is very important for India's Blue Economy, research and development, in such a situation Maldives is an important strategic stop-over for India. China is also looking to invest in trans-shipment ports at Marandhu and Ihabandhu islands in the Maldives and plans to build a naval submarine base at Marao Island.

Djibouti's proximity to the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea is important for trade and refueling base with Asia and European countries as well as strategic and economic importance for India and its maritime neighbors. Other islands like Mauritius, Seychelles, DeoGarcia, Djibouti have made Indian Ocean a field of competition from the point of view of commercial, economic and security.

So India and its maritime neighbours are economically interdependent, which is an important factor to take into account. With India cultivating stronger economic relations with nations like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, trade routes in the Indian Ocean have seen an upsurge in activity. These alliances are not just commercial; rather, they are a component of a larger initiative to improve economic growth and regional connectivity. Strategic economic partnerships are being created, as seen by India and Sri Lanka's involvement in projects such as the Trincomalee oil tank farm and Colombo Port City. Recent occurrences highlight how closely linked India's marine security is to that of its neighbours in terms of security. Increased security issues, from piracy to territorial disputes, have been witnessed in the Indian Ocean region. India and other nations share a common commitment to safeguarding the safety of crucial sea lanes, as demonstrated by their joint efforts in maritime security initiatives (Maldives, Seychelles). Furthermore, a concerted effort to address shared security problems is shown in the increased frequency of cooperative naval drills with nations like Thailand and Myanmar.

To balance the power of other regional players, India has been actively cultivating closer diplomatic connections with its maritime neighbours. The goal of the Quad project, which includes Australia, Japan, India, and the United States, is to encourage an open and free Indo-Pacific while bringing attention to the common concerns about regional stability. India's diplomatic reach goes beyond the Quad, as it works to fortify its standing as a major actor in the shifting geopolitical dynamics by fostering bilateral ties with nations such as Mauritius and Indonesia. Furthermore, a vital component of India's interactions with its maritime neighbours is the focus on

environmental sustainability and climate change. Collaboration in fields like environmental protection and disaster management has been prompted by the effects of climate change on the Indian Ocean region. India's collaboration with nations such as Bangladesh and the Maldives in tackling climate-related issues demonstrates the understanding of the mutual accountability in preserving the natural equilibrium of the region.

### **Conclusion**

If seen, there are many new challenges and opportunities with India and all its neighbouring countries located in the Indian Ocean, the only thing is how they are looking at them. Keeping in view a statement of former Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee “You can change friends but not neighbours”, the Modi government changed the Look East Policy brought by PV Narasimha Rao in 1991 for its neighbors by Act East Policy in 2014. Is done . Now, whether it is a land neighbor or a maritime neighbor, from small to large, India, being a big brother in the Indian Ocean region, has to develop all with all. To counterbalance China’s debt trap policy, India will have to take all its neighbours along. The area of the Indian Ocean has now expanded considerably, changing into the Indo-Pacific region, which has reached from the East African coast to the East American coast touching the South China Sea through the Strait of Malacca. Globalization and digitalization have made the challenges and opportunities almost the same for all. That is why India and its terrestrial and maritime neighbors should maintain cooperation with each other to maintain peace and stability in the region. Keeping in mind the rules of International Maritime Law (UNCLOS), India should promote projects like Sagarmala through bilateral and multilateral partnerships so that manufacturing, trade and tourism can be encouraged between these countries. The countries of the Indian Ocean region need to come back on a single platform by restarting SAARC (SAARC) with some strict rules, so that the challenges coming in the future can be easily dealt with. But it must always be kept in mind that without India and its terrestrial and maritime neighbours, no shared vision can be accomplished in the Indian Ocean region. The changing dynamics of India’s maritime links with its neighbours highlight the multifaceted character of these connections. Beyond traditional security concerns, economic collaboration, diplomatic endeavours, and environmental factors are changing the conversation about India’s maritime neighbours.

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## Chapter 11

### India – Myanmar Relations

Sandeep Verma

(Research Scholar),

Department of Defence & Strategic Studies,  
University of Allahabad, Prayagraj (UP)

#### **ABSTRACT –**

Myanmar has been in crisis since February 2021, when the military overthrew the government and imprisoned Aung San Suu Kyi and other leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD). India, as the world's largest democracy, will be concerned if democracy in such close proximity is jeopardized. However, India has vital interests in Myanmar that it wishes to protect and strengthen. While the West has made democracy the entire focus of its Myanmar policy, India does not. India, like the majority of its immediate neighbors, has been eager to counter Myanmar's military's authoritarian tendencies. Its diverse interests also demand that India maintain open lines of communication with all parties.

**KEY WORDS-** Democracy, Military, Security, Relationships.

#### **Introduction**

Following the signing of the treaty of friendship in 1951, relations between India and Myanmar became official. The groundwork for a more meaningful relationship was laid during PM Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Myanmar in 1987. With their shared cultures, histories, and ethnic and religious ties, India and Myanmar have historically had a lot in common. In addition, the two countries share a substantial geographic border. In the past, the Extended British Empire in Asia included both India and Myanmar. Relations between the two nations have generally been cordial since the end of World War II when the two nations gained their independence. The first Prime ministers, Jawaharlal Nehru, collaborated closely on economic development. Both India and Myanmar were active participants in the Non-Aligned Movement, and India even gave Myanmar some military support. However, in 1962, things started to get tense between the two. India

firmly opposed General Ne Win's implementation of a military dictatorship in Myanmar and backed the pro-democracy forces. The Ne Win regime declined to join the Commonwealth of Nations, took an anti-Soviet stance while relations between India and the Soviet Union were improving, and backed down from the Non-Aligned Movement in 1979. Though some tensions persisted, India and Myanmar's relations did start to improve from 1988 onward. Aung San Suu Kyi received the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding from India in 1993, by which time the Myanmar government had already declared her *Persona non grata*. India continued to support pro-democracy organisations. The State Law and Order Restoration Council's isolationist approach made it more difficult for the two countries to resume full diplomatic relations. However, after 1993, India's policy toward Myanmar was reviewed, and India took a less moralistic and more practical stance. The improvement of ties between the two nations has been driven by this deliberate transition from an idealistic to one that was firmly grounded in *realpolitik*.

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's focus on the Southeast Asian nations reflected India's growing interest in its regional neighbourhood. Former Indian foreign secretary Shyam Saran explains India's Quest to reach out to its Asian neighbours in these words: "Proximity is the most difficult and testing among [the] diplomatic challenges a country faces. We have, therefore, committed ourselves to giving the highest priority to closer political, economic and other ties with our Neighbours in South Asia". India holds a special place in the geopolitics of the Asian continent due to geography, with our influence extending well beyond South Asia and our interests. Whether it be East Asia, West Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, or South-East Asia, bordering distinct subcategories of Asia. Bangladesh's unwillingness to cooperate in this effort further highlighted the significance of Myanmar. Bangladesh was a target of India's Look East policy, which aimed to open markets in Southeast Asia. Without this change in policy, the risk of stoking ongoing insurgencies would have hampered the development of many of India's north-eastern states 'The Look East' policy and India's interest in Myanmar both reflect a growing global interest in Asia as a source of economic development in the 21st century. Myanmar is okay with India's growing involvement with its immediate and broader neighbourhood and supports its quest for a place in the sun. The

additional goal of resolving issues in the north-Eastern states is a welcome addition to the agreement for the Myanmar government.

#### Economic cooperation

India and Myanmar agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding on Peace and tranquility in Border Areas in January 1994. In this agreement, the two nations agree to hold annual talks at the joint secretary and home secretary levels, optionally in each nation. There have been fifteen Joint Secretary Meetings so far, and fourteen Home Secretary meetings. Regular high-level visits have strengthened ties. Senior General Maung Aye visited for the first time in January 2000 and most recently in April 2008. Senior General Than Shwe, the State Peace and Development Council's current chair, travelled to India in October 2004.

A head of state from Myanmar visited India for the first time in 25 years during this trip. From the Indian perspective, Vice President Shekhawat visited Myanmar in November 2003, and President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam made his first visit to Myanmar as Indian head of state since Rajiv Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister in 1987 during his trip there in March 2006. More recently, in February 2009, Vice President Hamid Ansari travelled to Yangon. Over the past ten years, there have been numerous meetings between the foreign ministers of India and Myanmar. Several Memorandums of Understanding and Agreements have been signed during these visits.

#### Defence cooperation

Mutual interests and national security considerations are the foundation of India and Myanmar's defence cooperation. Regular high-level visitation exchanges and a few bilateral military drills have served as markers. In 2000, Senior General Maung Aye of Myanmar and General V.P. Malik, the chief of the Indian Army Staff, met in Shillong and Yangon. Since that time, high-ranking representatives from all three military services have frequently visited. Vice Admiral Soe Thane, the head of the Myanmar navy, made a significant visit in April 2007. Additionally, General Deepak Kapoor, the current chief of army staff, as well as his predecessor, General J.J. Singh, visited Myanmar in October 2009, as did Admiral Sureesh Mehta, the chief of naval staff for the Indian Navy.

The annual multilateral "Milan" naval exercises and interactions in the Indian Ocean have been attended by Myanmar since 2004, along with other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. When determining the specifics of India's strategic engagement with Myanmar, cooperation in the area of counterinsurgency operations takes precedence over



other considerations. With the tribal People on the Myanmar side of the border, the insurgents operating in the north-eastern Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram share ethnic ties. Since the 1990s, the number of terrorist attacks perpetrated by these groups, which claim to speak for the tribal populations on both sides of the border, has increased, necessitating good relations between the militaries of the two nations. events involving drug trafficking.

Additionally, there has been an increase in macroterrorism in the north-eastern states. India must take a proactive role as a stabilizer and a balancer in order to reduce the potentially dangerous manifestations of drug abuse. It must also make sure that its focus on traditional security does not distract from non-traditional security issues. India must collaborate with its neighbours to establish regional and sub-regional institutions to handle these issues. New Delhi is becoming more and more aware that fighting insurgent groups requires more than just military means. Operations to counter insurgency together have been carried out for a while. Operation Golden Bird, a joint military operation between the armies of India and Myanmar against north-eastern insurgent organisations such as the People's Liberation Army, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, and the United Liberation Front of Asom, was successfully carried out in April and May 1995. Forty insurgents were slain, and a sizable arsenal of weapons was found.

The Myanmar army raided several Manipuri rebel bases in November 2001, apprehending nearly 200 rebels and seizing 1,500 guns. When General Than Shwe visited India in 2004, he promised to take action against insurgents operating out of Myanmar. The Tatmadaw continued these operations in 2005 and 2006. In 2007, the Tatmadaw launched a new military offensive against rebel organisations. The two nations can now exchange real-time "actionable" intelligence to deal with insurgents in the border region thanks to a Memorandum of Understanding on Intelligence Exchange Cooperation that was signed in 2008. India offered Myanmar's armed forces uniforms and combat training, and Myanmar accepted. In addition, India offered to help the Myanmar military maintain its current Russian military hardware and leased a squadron of helicopters. Joint naval exercises and several port calls have been carried out since 2003.

Over the years, the Indian Military has provided training at various locations to military officers from Myanmar at various ranks. A

paramilitary force's dual responsibilities include guarding the Indo-Myanmar border and upholding internal security in the north-eastern states. As part of its responsibilities, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police also patrols the area near the Myanmar border. These paramilitary and police forces collaborate closely with their counterparts in Myanmar. India has provided Myanmar with military equipment, but it has mostly only transferred small arms. In April 2007, Lieutenant General Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint, the quartermaster general for Myanmar and a member of the State Peace and Development Council, visited India and provided the chief of army staff with a shopping list for military equipment. To help clear out Indian insurgents, Lieutenant General Tin demanded infantry weapons and ammunition. Small arms like side arms, light machine guns, and assault rifles were heavily represented on the Myanmar list. During natural disasters, India has provided enormous assistance to Myanmar and has frequently been the first to deliver humanitarian aid. After Cyclone Nargis struck in May 2008, India began Operation Sahayata (Operation Help). Two Indian navy ships and two Indian air force planes were sent to help the people of Myanmar who were affected by the cyclone. A significant amount of assistance was given in the form of emergency rations and medical supplies.

#### Cultural Exchange

Along with running frequent cultural events, the Mission's cultural wing also hosts regular yoga and bharatnatyam classes with devoted teachers from India. Buddhist Cultural Heritage Photo Exhibition and Books on Buddhism were organised in Shwedagon Pagoda on the sidelines of an International Conference on Buddhist Cultural Heritage. The Sarnath Style Buddha Statue, which the Government of India had installed on the grounds of the Shwedagon Pagoda as a gift to the people of Myanmar, was also unveiled in Yangon in December 2012. A Carnatic Music Nite by Padmashri Sudha Ragunathan, a book reading by renowned author Dr. Amitav Ghosh, an Odissi dance performance by a renowned Indian troupe, and local dances by Myanmar troupes in connection with the ASEAN-India Car Rally are some of the other cultural events that will be taking place. Students from the Art and Culture University of Yangon collaborated with National Theatre staff to host a night of Indian and Myanmar dance. The Ananda Temple in Bagan is being preserved and restored by India.

#### Indian Diaspora

With the establishment of British rule in Lower Burma in 1852, the history of the Indian community in Myanmar can be traced back to the middle of the 19th century. During the British occupation, Indians predominated in a number of sectors, including the civil service, education, trade, and commerce, in the two cities of Myanmar, Mandalay and Yangon. The official Myanmar census from 1983 states that there are 428428 PIOs living in Myanmar. Nearly 150,000 members of the Indian community reside in Bago (Zeyawaddy and Kuayktaga), the Tanintharyi Region, and Mon State, where they primarily work in agriculture. The majority of NRI families in Myanmar reside in urban areas and work for multinational corporations with headquarters in Thailand, India, and Singapore.

#### Challenges for India

- **China's Influence on Northeast Insurgency:** China has tightened its economic control over Myanmar ever since the coup, paying particular attention to initiatives essential for the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. Furthermore, the recent deadly attack on an Assam Rifles convoy close to the Myanmar border served as a stark reminder of China's propensity for causing unrest in the Northeast.
- **Rohingya Issue:** Aung San Suu Kyi's silence on the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar has only led to the plight of the hapless Rohingya take a backseat. This is not in India's national security interest in the north-east.
- **Porous Indo-Myanmar Border:** The 1643-km-long Indo-Myanmar border, which facilitates cross-border movement of militants, illegal arms and drugs, is extremely porous. The border runs along hilly and inhospitable terrain and provides cover to the activities of various Indian Insurgent Groups (IGs)

#### Way Forward

- **Acknowledging the Military's Primacy:** The role of Myanmar's army would be key to the unfolding of any democratic transition there, so India's active engagement would be needed with the military. Even as India continues to call for a restoration of the democratic process, it shall engage with the army in Myanmar to address Indian concerns as well. Marginalising the army will only push it into China's arms.
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** The Buddhist perspective of India's cultural diplomacy can be used to improve relations with Myanmar. Myanmar, which has a majority of Buddhists, should be sympathetic to India's "Buddhist Circuit" initiative, which aims to connect ancient

Buddhist heritage sites throughout different Indian states in order to increase the number of foreign tourists visiting India. Additionally, this might strengthen India's diplomatic relationships with nations like Myanmar that have a majority of Buddhists.

•Resolving Rohingyas Issue: It will be simpler for India to manage its relations with Myanmar and Bangladesh and concentrate more on bilateral and subregional economic cooperation the sooner the Rohingya issue is resolved.

### **Conclusion**

The Indian government has shown little interest in speaking up on behalf of the Indian diaspora from Myanmar despite the rising tide of discontent among them. For maintaining the status quo in its relations with Myanmar, the Indian government has taken its fair share of heat. The study's findings show that economic cooperation and cross-border trade between India and Myanmar have grown recently. The "look east to act east" shift in India's foreign policy and economic priorities has significantly contributed to the emergency in cross-border regions, including the border between India and Myanmar.

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## Chapter 12 Baluchistan: A zone of extreme possibilities for India

Reshma Singh

(Senior Research Scholar)  
Department of Geography  
Sahakari P. G. College Mihrawan  
(V. B. S. P. University) Jaunpur

### **Abstract**

The future of the Baloch and their freedom movement is embedded in uncertainty. While there are many who see the possibility of a resurgence as likely, the odds are stacked strongly against the Baloch. Lacking in both military prowess as well as economic financing, the Baloch have only been able to sustain their movement for this long due to sheer determination. Thus, the Baloch freedom struggle has suffered a shortage of numbers that will never be a match for the Pakistani military. However, this is not the only obstacle to a united state of Balochistan: the lack of international support and internal unity have also had similar effects. Most of the current leaders of Balochistan are subsumed by their own self-interests and internal political tensions and lack the motivation to form a common front against the Pakistani state.

### **Background:**

The Baluchistan region spans an area exceeding half a million square kilometers in the southeastern part of the Iran plateau, located south of the central deserts and the Helmand River. Predominantly inhabited by Baluch and Pashtun ethnic groups, the majority are Sunni Muslims, with a minority of Shia Muslims and Hindus also residing in the province. Baluchistan is divided among Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran, with the largest portion belonging to Pakistan. Despite its rich natural resources, including chromites, fluorite, marble, gold, gas, iron, and petroleum, Baluchistan remains one of the economically disadvantaged provinces in Pakistan, historically marginalized. The province's conflict traces back to the independence of Pakistan in 1947, marked by disputes over the One Unit policy and

military bases, leading to armed conflicts in subsequent years. Ongoing issues, such as attacks on security officials, political leaders' detentions, and proclamations of independence, have fueled the persistent conflict. The conflict primarily involves the inhabitants of Baluchistan and the government of Pakistan, with root causes encompassing unstable politics, ethnic tensions, resource and development disparities, human rights concerns, Islamic extremism, terrorist groups, foreign involvement, and educational challenges.

### **Baloch Uprising, Aspirations, and Leaders:**

While Jaish al-Adl holds sway on the Iranian side, the Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS) dominates the Pakistani side, formed in November 2018 by unifying three Baloch subnationalist groups: the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), the Baloch Republican Guards (BRG), and a faction of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). The BRAS, symbolizing recent developments, emerged during the fifth uprising in 2002, adopting guerrilla warfare against the military. In the early years, Baluchistan witnessed a full-scale insurgency, with the BLA controlling substantial regions under the leadership of key figures Akbar Bugti and Balach Marri. Bugti and Marri, influential tribal leaders, led thousands in resisting Pakistani forces, resulting in an intense conflict. Presently, many key Baloch leaders have faced exile or elimination by the Pakistani state, diminishing the intensity of the insurgency from the early 2000s. However, the BRAS and other militant groups persistently engage in attacks against the Pakistani establishment, underscoring the ongoing turmoil in Baluchistan.

#### **a) Unstable Politics and Ethnicity:**

The Baluch people have consistently faced a lack of adequate representation in politics, including the military, contributing to their political exclusion from the provincial council of Baluchistan. At times, they were unable to complete their tenures due to the central government's exclusionary tendencies, intensifying the ethnic conflict in pursuit of autonomy or potential independence. The 1999 military coup, which brought Pervez Musharraf to power, heightened the general sense of alienation among the Baluchs. The underrepresentation of Baluch people in the army, coupled with the dominance of Punjabis, the primary ethnic group in Pakistan, further deepened divisions. While the transition from Musharraf's military government to Zardari's civilian government somewhat alleviated the situation, violent attacks in 2009 and 2010 reignited tensions. The

Pakistani government is frequently held responsible for the Baluchistan problem, with an ongoing military operation in Waziristan exacerbating the situation, leading to hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people.

b) Resources and Development Issues:

The unequal distribution of resource revenues remains a significant factor contributing to the problem. The Baluchistan province's resources, particularly gas used for Pakistan's energy production, are a major point of contention. Despite claims by the Pakistani government regarding economic progress, Baluchs perceive policies such as the 'Aghaz e hoqooq e Baluchistan' Economic Package as inefficient, providing no tangible benefits to the province's residents. Current developmental issues, including the construction of Gwadar Port and the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, further exacerbate tensions, with Baluchs feeling excluded from these projects.

c) Human Rights:

From 2003 to 2008, over 8000 people were reportedly kidnapped by Pakistani security forces in the province, accompanied by cases of torture, evidenced by burn marks, broken limbs, pulled-out nails, and drill holes in victims' heads. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's 2011 report implicated the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Frontier Corps in disappearances. Additionally, basic services in Baluchistan, such as literacy, sanitation access, mortality rates, electrification, and safe drinking water, lag significantly behind national averages.

d) Terrorist Organizations and Islamic Extremism:

Baluchistan is host to several extremist groups, including Al Qaeda, Quetta Shura e Taliban, and Tahreek Taliban, complicating the conflict dynamics. The province's strategic location and economic challenges have provided fertile ground for these groups to engage in organized crimes under the guise of religious ideologies. Hazara Shia immigrants from Afghanistan, constituting a significant population, have been victims of sectarian violence, facing numerous attacks resulting in injuries and fatalities, as reported by Zahid Gishkori in 2012.

e) Foreign Support:



The Pakistani government has accused the Indian government and occasionally the United States of supporting the Baluch movement to destabilize the country. Both nations have consistently denied these allegations. Bugti, a prominent leader of Baluchistan, expressed willingness to accept aid from India, Iran, and Afghanistan for the defense of Baluchistan. The roles of Iraq and Iran are crucial due to their support for Shia Muslims. In February 2010, the leader of Jundullah, captured in Iran, claimed that the United States had promised military equipment and a base in Afghanistan. This assertion aligns with Pakistan's claims against the United States.

f) Education:

Education stands out as a central factor in the Baluchistan conflict, with the Baluchis contending that their right to education is neglected. Despite the Pakistani government doubling scholarship numbers from 2010 onwards, viewed as a step toward development, Baluch nationals argue that the government falls short in providing education and insufficient efforts are made to develop educational institutions.

g) Security Situation:

While Quetta showcases new shopping malls and housing societies, discussions with various segments of society reveal limited investment in other productive sectors. The primary deterrent to increased investment is the security situation, even though recent improvements have been noted. Investors remain cautious, fearing potential losses if the security situation deteriorates again. Consequently, the majority of development in Quetta focuses on the real estate sector, largely influenced by affluent Afghan immigrants, causing a significant rise in real estate prices.

h) Difficulties in Transporting Traded Goods:

The closure of borders at Taftan and Chaman has severely impacted informal trade (smuggling) between Pakistan and Iran, as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan. The livelihoods of thousands dependent on these trade routes have been lost. Despite possessing proper import documents, trucks carrying imported goods face obstacles at multiple checkpoints from Chaman and Taftan borders to other cities, causing delays, increased costs due to speed money payments, and frustration among traders.

i) Lack of Education and Skills:

A prevalent issue highlighted by various segments of society is the deficiency in education and a skilled labor force in Balochistan, including Quetta. While education-related indicators show improvement, the low education level, literacy rate, and, notably, the quality of education hinder the availability of a skilled and educated labor force. The lack of attention to the "software" aspect of education, focusing on quality, contributes to the inferior education system. Affordability constraints drive individuals to seek education and medical treatment outside the province, further lowering educational attainment and skills in Balochistan

Balochistan: Untapped Potential

Balochistan holds a crucial geostrategic position at the crossroads of the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia, facing the Strait of Hormuz. Positioned for cultural, socio-economic, and geographical exchanges, the province possesses the potential to become a thriving industrial hub through substantial private investment. Despite this potential, various factors have hindered its realization. Approximately 21 million barrels of crude oil traverse the Strait of Hormuz daily, emphasizing Balochistan's significance. Its extensive borders, spanning 900 km with Iran and 1,200 km with Afghanistan, provide access to mineral-rich regions and act as a gateway to resource-abundant provinces like Punjab and KP. Moreover, its proximity to the oil and gas reserves in Central Asia enhances its strategic importance, positioning Balochistan as a pivotal point for both intra- and inter-regional trade.

However, prevailing statistics indicate that Balochistan ranks as the least developed among Pakistan's provinces. Even the capital city, Quetta, the fifth-largest in terms of population, lags behind other provincial capitals. A visit to Quetta reveals that while major roads, telecommunications, housing, and schools (with an emphasis on quantity over quality) show signs of expansion, crucial amenities like water supply and reservoirs, sewerage, waste collection, health infrastructure, new market development, and energy initiatives exhibit limited progress. Notably, sports facilities often remain

inaccessible to the public, leaving stadiums and playgrounds empty while children play on the streets.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the Baluchistan conflict is deeply entrenched and intricate, rooted in historical, political, and social factors. Beyond historical and political causes, ethnicity and religion significantly contribute to the conflict's perpetuation. The lack of representation in decision-making and insufficient political quotas exacerbate ongoing issues, further escalating the conflict beyond control.

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## Chapter 13 India – Sri Lanka Relations

Ishan Deiwedi ,  
(Research Scholar) ,

Department of Defence and Strategic studies,  
University of Allahabad, Prayagraj

### **ABSTRACT**

The age of relations between India and Sri Lanka is more than 2500 years as mentioned in the Indian epic Ramayana. Since then relations have experienced various ups and downs significantly. In this framework, the "Sri Lanka's India First" strategy and "India's Neighbourhood First Policy" had to deal with a variety of complex issues that ultimately shaped current ties. Sri Lanka holds a strategically important location in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), which could control three continents Asia, Africa and Australia respectively. During World War 2 and its aftermath, the Indian Ocean Region became an area of conflict and dominance due to the rise of superpowers. Every nation wants its dominance on the trade routes as well as rising Chinese intervention in the region is posing a great challenge for India.

Therefore, the chapter discusses various factors both domestic and external which are influencing the relations between India and Sri Lanka and present fresh perspectives.

### **INTRODUCTION**

India and Sri Lanka maintained their multifaceted relationship, which evolved over thousands of years, due to close geographical proximity, also religious, cultural, linguistic, and political factors. Sri Lanka, in its demography, is a pear-shaped island, separated by Palk Strait from India, lying at the southern tip of India. India is the only neighbour of Sri Lanka and both countries are republics within the Commonwealth of Nations. During the colonial era, Britain recognized the importance of the strategic location of Sri Lanka which is why the concept of "strategic unity" has been considered essential for India.

Both the countries, India and Sri Lanka occupy a Geo-Strategic location in South Asia as well as in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). From the Indian point of view, the geopolitics of Sri Lanka can directly affect India's policymaking. In the Changing world scenario, relations with neighbours are very important. India as a reliable

partner always tries to maintain its relations with Sri Lanka by giving economic aid, bureaucratic reforms, and by defence and energy agreements.

In this chapter, we will examine the comprehensive study as well as the principles and procedures that subsist in the relations between both countries. The primary focus is on the political, economic, cultural, defence and security issues that have created an impact on the relationship between the two states.

### **Geopolitical Significance of Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka is an island country located in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), separated by the Palk Strait, which makes it geopolitically important for several major powers. During the time of the Cold War, the British Defence and External Affairs Agreement of 1948 and the Maritime Agreement of 1962 with the USSR highlighted the importance of Sri Lankan strategic location.

Due to its enviable location, Sri Lanka is situated in the centre of the world's maritime trade route which directly connects Asia, Africa and Australia. Approx 60,000 ships, 2/3 of the world's oil, 50% of the world's container as well as least 80% of Indian ships pass through this route. Important ports such as Colombo, Galle, Trincomalee and Hambantota can play a significant role in the geopolitics in the Indian Ocean Region.

Also, China's massive involvement in Hambantota port through its String of Pearls strategy garnered the deepest controversy in the South Asian region. On the other hand, Chinese intervention in Sri Lanka is a serious concern for Indian foreign policy.

### **Indian Policy towards Sri Lanka: from Past to Present**

The earliest mention of Sri Lanka dates back to the time of the Indian epic the Ramayana as "resplendent land". Also, the relations go back to the times of the advent of Buddhism in the 4th century BCE by Mahinda the son of Indian emperor Ashoka. During the Western colonization, both countries survived due to the British administrative framework and missionaries for their political and cultural identities. After gaining independence in 1948, Ceylon was renamed Sri Lanka in 1972 and later in 1978 was officially named the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

In post post-colonial war era both countries maintain their relationships due to their alliance with the Commonwealth of Nations. Also, India always tried to deliver the thought that it had respect for Ceylon's independence and sovereignty without having any hidden

agenda of expansion, for that reason India did not react to the 1963 China – Ceylon Maritime Agreement. During the 1980s the relations between both countries marked a critical point due to the beginning of ethnic conflicts between the Singhalese majority and Tamil minority.

As the Cold War ended, India gave itself a fresh outlook to maintain and explore relations. India tried to stay away from internal matters but was always in favour of maintaining peace and security without any power struggle. Although this period saw civil unrest in Sri Lanka at its highest peak. Post-internal war or post-LTTE scenario saw rising Chinese intervention in Sri Lankan foreign policy which makes serious concerns for India in this region.

### **Internal Problem of Sri Lanka**

Since colonial rule, Sri Lanka has been deeply rooted in ethnic conflicts. Sri Lankan population comprised of approximately 74 per cent Singhalese group claims Aryan descent and approximately 20 per cent of the Tamil group claims Dravidian descent. From the 1830s onwards, the British transported labour from India, especially from Tamil Nadu and settled them in the northern part of Ceylon. After the independence of Ceylon, discrimination against Tamils rise. In 1954 the then Indian Prime Minister Pt. Nehru and Prime Minister of Ceylon John Kotelwala signed an agreement. The agreement stated that Indian Tamil could apply either for Ceylon's citizenship or Indian citizenship but Sri Lankan government refused to accept it.

Thereafter in 1964 Prime Minister Shashtri and Prime Minister Srimavo Bhandarnaik signed a Shashtri – Srimavo pact, according to this pact 3 lakh Indian Tamils would get Sri Lankan citizenship and India also agreed to repatriate a sizeable number to India. This was also undone due to Indo – Pak war of 1965 and Indo – Pak war of 1971, also Sri Lankan policy gradually shifted towards the United States. In 1977, Jayawardene JR succeeded Srimavo, he was not interested in maintaining relations with India also the marginalisation of Tamils got hiked. For that reason the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi warned the Sri Lankan government and at the same time, India adopted a delicate policy to train Tamil rebels in Sri Lanka. It was in 1976 Vellupillai Prabhakaran formed the Liberation of Tamil Tigers Elam (LTTE), after the destabilization of the Jayawardene regime LTTE emerged as a powerful and effective force in Sri Lanka.

During the 1990s as tensions grew in Sri Lanka, India took an active role by signing India and Sri Lanka Accord (ISLA) in 1987 to conclude ethnic conflicts by constitutional and political means. ISLA suggested the establishment of a provincial council system and devolution of power for nine provinces in Sri Lanka, which was known as the 13th Amendment. The ISLA was rejected by LTTE and resorted to violence against both India and Sri Lanka. India deployed the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) under Operation Pawan. India increased the number of IPKF from 6000 to 1 lakh and justified this action for national security reasons. In 1989, the newly elected Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Ranasinghe Premadasa demanded to stop the ongoing operations of IPKF and immediate withdrawal from Sri Lanka. After the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, India realised the failure of this mission.

The Cold War period saw civil unrest in Sri Lanka. But when Mahinda Rajapaksa got elected to power he followed a hard-line approach against LTTE. He increased the military backlash to counter LTTE. In 2007, V Prabhakaran was assassinated by Sri Lankan forces and the most violent conflict in Sri Lankan history came to an end in 2009. Then India was working through rehabilitation programmes in war-torn areas.

### **Political Relations**

Though the relations of both the countries have witnessed the phases of divergence as well as convergence the fact of the matter is that the relations have never touched the point of saturation or have never been completely broken up. Under his presidential campaign of Mahinda Rajapaksa "Mahinda Chinthan", relations developed interdependently. There have been high-level exchanges of visits at regular intervals. In February 2015, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Srisena was on an official visit to India and signed a Civil Nuclear cooperation agreement. Thereafter, in April 2017, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe undertook his visit to India.

Sri Lanka is an active member of regional organizations like BIMSTEK ( Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), and it has always been in India's geopolitical interests. To focus on its "Neighbourhood First" policy India invited leaders of BIMSTEC member countries to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his council in 2019.

In March 2015, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Colombo; it was the first stand-alone visit to Sri Lanka in the last 28 years. He again visited as a chief guest for the first-ever International Vesak Day celebration in 2017. His third visit was in June 2019 after the Easter Bombing in Sri Lanka which is noted as a symbolic gesture reflective of the special relationship between the countries.

### **Commercial Relations**

India and Sri Lanka opened their economic and commercial relations after the Cold War period. Sri Lanka was the first South Asian country liberalised in 1978 and perceives India as a potential FDI supplier. India in turn is Sri Lanka's largest trade partner globally. Both countries signed the Free Trade Agreement in 1998 and became operational in 2001. From 2015-17 India's export was at 5.3 billion US\$ whereas import was at 743 million US\$.

The Indian government is investing in diverse areas such as petroleum retail, IT, financial services, real estate, telecommunication, hospitality and tourism, baking and food processing, metal industries, tires, cement, glass manufacturing and infrastructure development. On the other hand, Sri Lankan Investment also increased in India in the last few years, some examples are Brandix, MAS Holdings, John Keels and Aitken Spence Hotels. Also, both countries established a Joint Working Group (JWG) for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which is yet to be signed.

The tourism sector also forms an important link between India and Sri Lanka and India is the largest leading source market for Sri Lankan tourism. In tourism, India is the largest contributor with every fifth tourist being from India.

### **Cultural and Educational Relations**

From very ancient times India has been culturally interconnected with Sri Lanka. This legacy of relations is still valid and continuously ongoing in modern times as well. Both countries signed the Cultural Cooperation Agreement in 1977 for periodic cultural exchange programmes. Indian Cultural Centre in Colombo promotes Indian music, dance, Hindi and Yoga. In 1998 India – Sri Lanka Foundation was set up with the aim of enhancement of scientific, technical, educational and cultural cooperation. Recently both states celebrated 2600th years of attainment of enlightenment by Lord Buddha.

India also offers about 290 slots annually for scholarships to Sri Lankan students. Under the Indian Technical and Economic



Cooperation Scheme and Colombo Plan, another 370 slots are offered to Sri Lankan students per year.

### **Security and Defense Cooperation**

In the area of defence and security, both countries started cooperation after the 1990s. In recent years cooperation increased in the areas of maritime security, and joint training with the aim of military-to-military relationships. India and Sri Lanka conduct joint Military (Mitra-Shakti) and Naval exercises (SLINEX). India has been training Sri Lankan officials at the Defence University of India.

Indian Ocean Region plays a key role in both countries' security and commercial interests. In 1971, the then Ceylonese Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike introduced a peace proposal to the United Nations with the subject of the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. India was completely in favour of that proposal, and the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi criticised major powers for their military presence in this region. Again in 2015 during the Galle Dialogue, India highlighted the issue just to counter Chinese assertions in the IOR. In addition, at the Jakarta Concord 2017, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) recalled the UN General Assembly Resolution 2832 for Indian Ocean stability.

In April 2019, an agreement to counter Drug trafficking was concluded between both countries. Thereafter, a trilateral maritime security cooperation agreement was signed by India, Sri Lanka and Maldives to improve surveillance, and anti-piracy operations in IOR. After the Easter Bombing of 2019, the Sri Lankan Prime minister made a respectful gesture towards India and also thanked the Indian Government for their help in this crucial time.

### **Important Issues and Conflicts**

**Kachchatheevu Island Issue:** The small island of Kachchatheevu located about 10 miles northeast of Rameshwaram, is a disputed territory claimed until 1976 by India but administered by Sri Lanka at the moment. Between 1974- 76 four maritime agreements were signed by Indira Gandhi and Sirimavo Bandaranaike and ceded the island to Sri Lanka but after sometimes Tamil Nadu government of AIDMK refused to accept it and filed a petition and also demanded retrieval of the island to India.

**Fisherman Issue:** Incidents of straying fishermen are common from both sides, especially in Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar. Both states demarcated their International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) to resolve this problem but it failed. India and Sri Lanka have

agreed to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) on fisheries to find a permanent solution to the fishermen issue.

**UNHRC Issue:** After the assassination of Prabhakaran, the Sri Lankan government failed on the grounds of rehabilitation of Tamils and other civilians in the war-torn areas. This matter was taken to the United Nations Human Rights Commission where India voted against Sri Lanka in 2009, 2012 and 2013 on human rights violation issues.

### **Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka**

Currently, Sri Lanka is experiencing an unparalleled economic, worst economic crisis since independence, the crisis that has taken on epic humanitarian proportions. It has caused previously unheard-of levels of inflation, a close to complete depletion of foreign exchange reserves, a shortage of medical supplies, and a rise in the cost of necessities which led to public protests. Although India provided worth of \$4 billion line of credit lifeline quickly situation is still unstable. The primary cause of this issue is the mishandling of economic policies, which led to Sri Lanka becoming ensnared in China's debt trap.

### **Growing Chinese Influence**

It was Mahinda Rajapaksa who took Sri Lanka closer to China. In addition, Sri Lanka got Chinese help in the form of billions of dollars in loans and new infrastructure projects. As well as both countries entered into comprehensive strategic partnership. China also took over Hambantota port, which is expected to play a key role in Chinese Belt and Road initiatives, on a lease of 99 years and also building a Colombo international terminal. A civil nuclear cooperation was also signed between both countries which is a concerning issue for India's strategic depth in South Asia as well as in IOR.

### **Conclusion**

There have been so many ups and downs in relations between India and Sri Lanka due to various and conflicting issues. Indian foreign policy towards Sri Lanka and its approach has so far failed to achieve its stated goal. Foreign countries' meddling in Sri Lanka is growing as a result of the country's strategic location and significance. It has an impact on the national security of India. A recent tilt of Sri Lanka is also a serious concerning issue for Indian policymakers. As both countries have a democratic setup there is always a scope for broadening and deepening the ties.

The latest crisis in Sri Lanka, which was brought on by "debt diplomacy," exposes China's transactional approach to ties with

smaller nations. Given that China may use a similar strategy with other neighbours in its pursuit of a strategic edge in the area, India must give this careful thought and attention. However, this situation also offers India a chance to rebuild its reputation and position itself as a reliable ally of Sri Lanka and all of its neighbours.

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