

India's Foreign Policy and its Challenges

Dr.Ramesh Kumar, Asstt. Professor in Political Science

MLN College, YNR. Email- deswal0001@yahoo.com

Abstract:-

Most nations and large ones at that do not simply alter their worldwide orientation. States tend to be conventional about foreign policy. Fundamental changes in foreign policy take place only when there is a radical change either at home or in the world. Much as the ascent of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s shaped key changes in Chinese foreign policy, India's associations with the world have seen a fundamental alteration over the last decade and a half. A number of factors were at work in India. The old political and economic order at home had distorted and outwardly the end of the Cold War detached all the old benchmarks that guided India's foreign policy. Many of the center viewpoints of the older system had to throw away and consensus generated on fresh ones. The fall down of the Soviet Union and the new wave of financial globalization left India scrambling to find new anchors for its conduct of outer relations.

Keywords: - Policy, Political, Change, Relations, Globalization, Global, Economy.

Introduction:-

India has formal diplomatic relations with the largest part of the countries; it is the world's 2nd most populous country, the world's most-populous democratic system and one of the fastest growing major economies. With the world's 7th largest military expenses, 9th largest market by nominal rates and 3rd largest by purchasing power parity, India is a regional power, a nascent great power and a potential superpower. India's rising international influence gives it a well-known voice in global affairs. The Economist magazine argues, however, that underinvestment in diplomacy and a lack of planned vision have minimised India's influence in the world.

India is a newly industrialized country, it has a lengthy record of collaboration with numerous countries and is considered one of the leaders of the developing world along with China, Brazil, Russia and South Africa. India was one of the origin members of some international organisations, most notably the United Nations, the Asian Development Bank, G20 industrial nations and the initiator of the Non-aligned movement. India has also played an main and significant role in other int. organizations like East Asia Summit, World Trade Organisation, International Monetary Fund (IMF), G8+5 and IBSA Dialogue Forum. Regionally, India is a member of SAARC and BIMSTEC. India has taken part in a number of UN peacekeeping missions and in 2007; it was the 2nd largest troop provider to the United Nations.

India is currently seeking a permanent chair in the UN Security Council, along with the G4 Countries.¹

Most Indians agree that its first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had distinct an inimitable foreign policy for India at the very dawn of its freedom. in spite of many critics of his world view, a broad national consensus had emerged around Nehru's ideas on self-sufficient foreign policy, non-alignment, and 3rd world solidarity. Since the 1990s, though, the challenge for the Indian leaders has been to reinterpret Nehru's ideas to suit the latest political context that had confronted it. The new Indian leaders could neither denounce Nehru nor formally discard Nehru's dreams, for that would have invited grave political trouble. Yet they had to continually make up and refashion India's foreign policy to suit the new necessities. This has not been easy. The strain between the imperative of the new and the resistance of the old thoughts on how to conduct foreign policy is actual and is unlikely to end in the near prospect. The fear of the new and fondness for the old continue to be reflected in all aspects of Indian diplomacy from attractive the United States to an optimal strategy towards the minimum of the neighbours. The "new" foreign policy of India is really work in progress. Yet it is not hard to see that the way of Indian diplomacy has changed substantially since the end of the cold war amidst inner and outer impulses.²

Policy:-

India's foreign policy has always regarded the thought of neighborhood as one of widening concentric circles, around a central axis of historical and civilizing commonalities. As many as 21 million people of Indian origin live and work overseas and constitute an essential link with the mother country. An significant role of India's foreign policy has been to make sure their welfare and well being within the frame of the laws of the country where they live.³

Historical Overview:-

Modern Indian history can be divided into three broad time periods that overlap at the edges. The first age, in the 1950s and 1960s, features a basically united ideology shared by the majority of the Indian elite. The Congress party under Nehru enjoyed one-party supremacy at home and represented a mostly combined foreign policy ideology to the globe. Internationally, Nehru chose the middle path of non-alignment to confound the bipolar order of the Cold War, arguing that India would have to "plough a lonely furrow." This policy was followed until a border war with China in 1962 compelled the Indian establishment to face the realities of power politics in the international system. Subsequently, having weathered further conflict with Pakistan in 1965 and leadership changes in the Congress party, both the domestic scene and India's foreign policy began to shift. The period of the 1970s and 1980s was one of intermittent realism. The general election of 1967 marked the beginning of the decline of Congress hegemony. India Gandhi, Nehru's daughter, assumed leadership of the Congress in 1966 and by 1969 the party had split into two factions under the government and the party organization respectively. In August 1970, Mrs. Gandhi told a Congress Conference that the problems of developing nations could be faced "neither merely by idealism, not merely by sentimentalism, but by very clear opinion and hard-

headed revise of the situation.”Domestically, she used every way probable – constitutional and unconstitutional – to incorporate power within her party and take state governments into line. While a rhetorical promise was maintained to anti-imperialism, Third World solidarity and non-alignment abroad, and secularism, democratic system and socialism at home, a marked drift in practice towards power politics occurred in both Regions.⁴

The 1990s onwards saw the birth of pragmatism in Indian domestic political affairs and foreign policy. The old world order marked by the Cold War distorted, giving way to new configurations. At home, over four decades of socialist monetary policy culminated in a severe balance of payments disaster. Gradually, idealised conceptions of India’s society, polity and role in the world were generally discarded. The new ordering of the domestic area revolved largely around the process of electoral and parliamentary alliance structure. Shedding anti-Western ideology in the international field, India downplayed its earlier ethical exceptionalism, casting itself more as a country, like any other, on a quest for power and wealth. This produced greater normalisation of traditionally antagonistic associations with neighbouring countries, a greater concern in international institutions that could legitimise its rising huge power status, a more positive approach to relations with the USA and, importantly, self-reliance in nuclear defence. Indian foreign policy in the 21st Century is characterised by practicality and a willingness to do business with all (an approach also reflected in much of India’s familial politics).⁵

Challenges of India’s Foreign Policy:-

Changes which took place in 1989-91 were clearly looking at the worldwide level. World was passing through the period of ideological, militarily and economical changes. It was time to the end of cold war and the fall down of USSR. In such situations it was a main challenge to India to make coordination with international condition. Economic liberalization became obligation rather than requirement for India. In perspective of foreign policy, the main challenge for India, to list out the new subjects according to new world conditions because those subjects which were key determinant to India’s foreign policy in post independent age, became immaterial after the ending of cold war. The end of the Cold War saw India put back the idealism in its foreign policy with a practical approach as it sought to expand new and meaningful relationships that would aid its worldwide ascendancy. In post cold war period India adopt pragmatic aim and objective based, result oriented and optimistic foreign policy. India’s economic liberalization, started in the early 1990s, allowed it to make its new foreign policy on the thrusts of economic diplomacy. The 1990s also saw India shedding its non-aligned picture and pursuing the membership of other multilateral forums such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The end of cold war generated new challenges and created a lot of options for foreign policy-makers of India. In a Unipolar globe, there were so numerous challenges came in the way of policy-makers in terms of foreign policy.⁶

The challenges incorporated balancing the relations with worldwide powers, building a new partnership with regional association, expanding the influence in Asia, Africa and Latin America, making NAM more significant according to new conditions, improve India’s economic

and energy security, to deal with environmental and human security threats, UN reforms and permanent membership of Security Council and active pursuit for multipolar world.⁷

There are some problems before India's Foreign Policy:-

- India has to give priority to safeguarding its security interests in its neighbourhood. Nepal is currently being wracked by the Maoist insurgency and its political system is under strain. In Sri Lanka the Peace Process with the LTTE is showing some hopeful signs but its ultimate success will depend on Sinhala unity and the real transformation of the LTTE from a terrorist organization to a peace partner. Our largest border is with Bangladesh. This porous border creates problems of insurgency and illegal migration which can be dealt with effectively only in conditions of acceptance of each others' legitimate concerns. The problem of Indian insurgent groups misusing Bhutan's territory for launching terrorists operations against India has to be resolved within the framework of India's excellent relations with Bhutan.
- With Myanmar, with which India shares its borders in the troubled eastern region infested with violent insurgency, a cooperative relationship is being steadily built around a commitment to stabilize the area, cooperate in economic projects and create multi-modal transport links extending to Thailand and prospectively beyond. Myanmar is keen to balance its external relationships and India has vital long term interest in increasing Myanmar's strategic options.
- The major challenge and an outlook worthy of realization would be the appearance of Pakistan as a moderate Islamic State in the true sense, with "moderation" being evaluated not merely in terms of the pro and anti-West orientation of Islamic regimes. Pakistan was born on the basis of extremist muslim demands and the roots of its identity lie in ideologically confrontational Islam. Indeed, Pakistan's emergence was a "clash of civilizations" in action long before the West discovered this frightening concept. Political Islam, as opposed to pious Islam, which the West began to fear after the Khomeini Revolution in Iran because of its perceived anti-West orientation has long been used against India, first to break it up and now to continue wounding it through recourse to terrorism. The military, which has ruled Pakistan for large periods of its existence, has become the custodian of Pakistan's Islamic hostility towards India, not the least because under that cover it can continue to preserve its enormous privileges within the system. Pakistan was fully involved in the creation and unleashing of the Taliban on the hapless Afghans. The Al Qaeda networks were built under its nose. Together with Afghanistan, Pakistan became the epicenter of international concern. So long as this activity promoted

Pakistan's strategic interests and was directed against India, it was ignored by the West. Now we know at what cost. Big tragedies have big lessons to offer and for the sake of the victims all of us should learn them. Today the forces behind the Taliban and Al Qaeda, displaced from Afghanistan have re-emerged in the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan in Pakistan. What was removed by force in Afghanistan has re-emerged legally in adjoining areas waiting for patience and time to run out before the politics of fundamentalism and destabilization is resumed. The nerve-centre of all this remains in Pakistan.⁸

- International terrorism is our common challenge today and how we deal with it holds out common prospects for all of us. Political expediency, short term gains, considerations of geopolitics, the difficulties in making a choice between one's own immediate priorities and the global good, nurturing of old constituencies, faulty analysis, double standards, all these and other reasons unfortunately blur the moral clarity and political focus on how this terrorism should be dealt with. Pakistan is today being rewarded for its cooperation with the West against terrorism with political and financial oxygen. The military leader of Pakistan has been allowed to manipulate the political system by weakening mainstream political parties and creating space for fundamentalists. From the margins these fundamentalists have moved into the mainstream. While bottomless concerns are mounting about the nexus between fundamentalism, violence and weapons of annihilation, the spotlight is not on Pakistan which has all the three ingredients of concern, plus the additional one of fears of it becoming an "unsuccessful State". We have seen how there is a important lack of inquisitiveness about Pak's nuclear connection with North Korea in replace for missile knowledge, which poses serious challenges to our protection.
- One of the major challenges facing India today is the one posed by terrorism from across its borders. In fact, it is not a challenge that appeared in the context of today; the country has been seeing its innocent citizens victimized for the last two decades. It has evolved from being a mere law and order problem because of Pakistan's deliberate policy of relying on terrorism as a form of proxy war and an instrument of foreign policy. This has made terrorism a major security threat and countering it a predominant foreign policy challenge for us. India has successfully met this challenge earlier in Punjab. Cross-border terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir has assumed greater dimensions partly because the success that Pakistan had in foisting the Taliban in Afghanistan provided it with extensive experience of using terrorism as policy. According to conservative estimates, the extensive cultivation of opium in Afghanistan provided the Pakistani establishment with between US \$ 90 million to US \$ 136 million of money per annum for at least seven years. This money has been used to finance its proxy war in J&K, equip, train and arm

terrorists and infiltrate them into India with weapons and modern communication equipment.⁹

- The evolution of the situation in Afghanistan presents a complex and enormous security and political challenge to India's foreign policy. Afghanistan is more peaceful but not stable yet. The political vacuum in the Pashtun areas, the absence of any anti-Taliban cohesive Pashtun force, the failure to curb Pakistan's ambitions in south and eastern Afghanistan and the likelihood that the situation in the middle east may further divert attention from the danger of pro-Taliban Pashtuns being backed by Pakistan filling this vacuum is real and present. There are reports that Taliban and Al Qaeda elements are regrouping along its southern and eastern borders and continue to receive support, both moral and material from Pakistan. Early economic reconstruction of Afghanistan is one of the most important requirements for the return of peace and stability to that country. India has provided extensive humanitarian, financial and project assistance to Afghanistan. The governing philosophy of India's assistance to Afghan reconstruction has been to respond to Afghan felt and priority needs. India regards this as critical for local peace and solidity and views her association with Afghanistan as direct and mutual. Our close past links with Central Asia offer an advantage for building significant associations.
- Moving eastwards, East Asia has been a natural component of India's foreign policy priorities. India exists in Asia, the second key both demographically and geologically. Developments in Asia impinge directly on our security and strategic interests. China is a direct neighbour as are ASEAN countries such as Myanmar and Indonesia. The Indian Ocean straddles the most important sea routes that connect the oil producing region of the Gulf with the consumer countries of East Asia. Increase in maritime trade is another reality today. Cooperation between India and these countries is a necessary prerequisite for the 21st century to become the century of Asia. India's look east policy starts from North East Asia and not simply the ASEAN region. Yet, India is excluded from APEC as also ASEM. We have, however, a sound framework for meeting the challenges ahead – India has become a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum and a summit partner with the ASEAN. The ASEAN countries themselves have realized the value of engaging India for greater political, security and economic balance in the region. India has engaged in an effort to craft special trade and investment arrangements through an India-ASEAN Free Trade Area to be brought about in 10 years, a BIMST-EC FTA as also bilateral arrangements such as the India-Thailand FTA and India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement. BIMST-EC and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation are other structural frameworks for India's "Look-East" policy. We are working on a trilateral highway project between India, Myanmar and Thailand. Connectivity,

canalizing resources and policy coordination among India and the countries in the region are the tasks ahead.

- Our relations with the United States have entered a phase of unprecedented improvement. India and the United States are, respectively, the world's most populous and the most powerful democracies, having clear commonalities in shaping a new democratic and pluralistic world order. The US with its belief that it is right to be good and India with its belief that it is good to be right can together promote what is both good and right, in the one case bringing power to the enterprise and in the other case numbers. Our Prime Minister has described India and the US as natural partners. Our relationship with the US is being transformed. There is an intensive dialogue covering a broad agenda, seeking new possibilities for cooperation. Besides regular political dialogue, India and the United States have established over 15 institutional forums that meet regularly. Notwithstanding the chill of May 1998, dramatic progress has been seen in security and defence cooperation, and trade and investment – the US is our largest trading partner (US \$ 23 billion in goods and services last year), the predominant destination of our IT services exports (US \$ 5.7 billion last year) and the major source of foreign investments. Areas for dialogue include energy and environment, science and technology, biotechnology and health, information technology and cyber security, combating terrorism and missile defense. Yet, the challenges stay for enhanced management of relationships, given the dissimilar geo-strategic and financial contexts, and occasional differences in perspectives. Our approach seeks to deal with these differences in a transparent, positive manner, according to enduring principles of our foreign policy that sought never to define relations with any one nation through the prism of any other nation or local equations or association systems. The investment that both sides have made in the relationship is predicated as much on mutual benefit as on its global significance.
- Our relations with China are following a positive course and a steady effort to overcome past differences and build a growing convergence of interests is being made. The challenge that we face vis-à-vis China is to sustain the steady expansion and strengthening of the relationship in diverse fields even as we attempt to together resolve the border issue. India and China are amongst the fastest growing economies in the world, the two largest developing countries and two major Asian powers with a recognized capacity to play major roles in shaping the future of the continent. The challenge is to balance legitimate interests of all the other players – Japan, the ASEAN bloc and the US - in a cooperative framework. Bilateral trade between India and China this year will equal four and half billion US dollars. Compared to the three and a half billion dollars trade with Japan, this illustrates the progress in efforts to normalize relations. But the unresolved border issue as also elements of China's own internal and external policies, the impact of its growing strength on the region and beyond, the extent

of its sensitivity to concerns about proliferation of nuclear and missile technology in the region and the degree to which its economic success would translate into a more democratic, transparent system, would be a subject of intense interest to India as also to the international community as a whole.¹⁰

Conclusion:-

In years to come as India will graduate to a responsible world power, its foreign policy will be facing many more challenges. The biggest challenge will be walking tightrope between competing interests of India's friends; who may not be each other's friend. Other challenge will include increasing Indian leverage and presence in other developing countries and use their potential for own benefit. India will also be required to make its stand clear on many important global issues and there will be no escaping from this. India should align itself more with the BRICS grouping it has formed. It must try to have a more consistent foreign policy aligned with its BRICS allies. This may be the road ahead for India.

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