*International Journal of Applied Social Science* *REVIEW ARTICLE*
*Volume 2 (11&12), November & December (2015) : 340-346* ISSN : 2394-1405 (Print)
*Received : 10.11.2015; Revised : 15.11.2015; Accepted : 20.11.2015*

# India's Foreign policy towards Turkmenistan

**RENU SAIN**
CRCAS/ School of International Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (India)

**Key Words :** India's foreign policy, Human security, Environmental degradation

International Relations are meant to define foreign policy as an activity, which entails actions, reactions, and interactions of the state actors. It is considered as a "liminal" activity because policy-makers stay on a frontier between two worlds: the domestic politics of state as well as its external environment (Martin, 2013). Foreign policy is generally seen as purposive behavior as it is used to serve the purpose of the state and government. The field of foreign policy studies is filled with the processes of foreign policy making and tends to overlook the outputs of foreign policy making processes (Baldwin, 2000). The term 'foreign policy' is defined in several ways. George Modelski defines it as 'The system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment' (Rani, 2014).

The making of foreign policy is a complex and dynamic process as it's influenced by the changes in the domestic and international environment as well (Raveendran, 2010). A country's foreign policy, which is also called the international relations policy, is a set of goals that outline how the country will interact with other countries in economic, political, social and military ways. To a lesser extent, it makes sure the ways in which the country will interact with non-state actors. Foreign policies are designed to help protect a country's national interests, national security, ideological goals, and economic prosperity. This can happen as a result of peaceful cooperation with other nations, or also through exploitation (Wanjohi, 2011). In another terms, it can be established either by peace and friendliness or by force and power. The success and failure of such processes rely upon the national interests of a particular country. National security remains the primary goal of a foreign policy (Rani, 2014).

**Theoretical perspective of foreign policy :**

There are many theoretical aspects of foreign policy and its making. One of the important aspects is liberalism. Liberalism focuses on multilaterally emphasizing on the U.N., International governing bodies and consensus to promote international social justice (Anderson, 2005). It is a distinct ideology and set of institutions which shape the perceptions and strength of foreign relations with political societies that range from social welfare or social democratic to international welfare and development. In foreign affairs liberalism has shown, as it has in the domestic realm, many weaknesses. But its foreign affairs have witnessed some appreciated successes unlike its domestic realm (Doyle, 2009). However, liberalism is mainly concerned with the preferences of individuals or groups within the state and their influence on its external action (Martin, 2013).

There are three forms of Liberal theory which are known as Ideational, Commercial and Republican

**How to cite this Article:** Sain, Renu (2015). Environmental Degradation and Human Security in Kazakhstan. *Internat. J. Appl. Soc. Sci.,* 2 (11&12) : 340-346.

Liberalism. Each of them needs distinctive specification of the central elements of Liberal theory. Ideational Liberalism emphasizes on the compatibility of social preferences across fundamental collective goods like national unity, legitimate political institutions and socioeconomic regulation; Commercial Liberalism emphasizes on incentives created by opportunities for trans-border economic transactions; and Republican Liberalism emphasizes on the nature of domestic representation with their resulting possibilities for rent-seeking behavior (Moravcsik, 2001).

According to the neoliberal perspective, the international system is also mainly an arena for state interaction, but non-state actors and intergovernmental institutions can also serve a role. Since states try to maximize their interests in this arena, 'cooperation under anarchy' or the creation of institutions through durable inter-state cooperation become feasible. This presupposes bargaining among states on the basis of objectives that are predefined, formulated in the domestic context via the pluralistic competition of interests. Central to the formulation and defense of interests is an important focus on economic, in addition to military and natural resources, which makes the neoliberal concept of power broader than the neo-realists' to some extent (Keukeleire and Schunz, 2008).

In some respects, foreign policy analysis stays mainly within the realist paradigm because realism is based on the state-centric assumption. Whereas the states are the main actors in world politics. Realists consider that thestate which acts through its government is seen as 'unitary' and 'rational' actor, which pursues national interests shaped by its power, and competes with other states in an environment that is governed by anarchy. Since they are in a 'self-help' system, foreign policy behavior of a state is conditioned by global systemic pressures rather than ideological differences and internal pressures of the states (Mohapatra, 2014). Realism otherwise recognizes the use of force and threat of force, to achieve the nationalinterests(Anderson, 2005). It is different in terms of achieving its interest unlike liberalism. Realism understands foreign policy as rational behavior of a unitary actor being a state (Martin, 2013). The individualism bent is rather stronger in realism.

In the work entitled, 'Theory of International Politics', Waltz, the founding father of neo-realist thinking, refused the idea that his reasoning could be used to build a suitable theory of foreign policy. In short, if it is considered from a neo-realist perspective, foreign policy is strongly determined by their external environment than the internal, an international system characterized by anarchy. In such a system, states are understood as unitary, rational actors which interact to assure their security. A state's foreign policy behavior is determined by its relative power which is a function of the distribution of power in the international system, and is seen to depend on material resources such as military capacities, raw materials etc. these material resources empower the states to influence the international forces.Only little attention is paid to their domestic context (Keukeleire andSchunz, 2008).

Social constructivists think that foreign policy behavior of states is best explained by norms that are shared throughout domestic society for these norms, those resulting from the domestic identity, have bigger influence on how various states' agents think and conduct foreign policy. This is known as 'bottom-up' approach and it stresses domestic norms 'immediate orientation to behavior', consequently making them 'the appropriate independent variable of a constructivist theory of foreign policy' (Boekle *et al.,* 2001). Constructivism takes foreign policy as a feature of national identity, for it studies the role of norms and the constitution of identities as in socialization of actors and so on, and their influence on national interests (Martin, 2013).

The term 'Idealism' suggests the priority of ideals, principles, values, and goals over concrete realities (Burchill and Linklater, 2005).Idealists assert that morality plays an important role in international affairs and it should not be violated under any circumstance. They point to the historical record to prove their point. States have established many international moral principles and regimes through mutual cooperation with each other (Nel, 2006). Idealists claim that non-state actors are also important factors in international politics. Finally idealists believe that the agenda of international politics is extensive. As idealist adherents, foreign affairs agendas have expanded and diversified

over last few decades such that economic and social issues are seen at the forefront of foreign policy discussions and debates (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993).

Central Asia has an important pivotal role to play in the coming years. It can become a natural, historically formed zone as well as it can also form the hub of Islamic extremism. It is also one of the most convenient routes of transit. It is rich in minerals, especially hydrocarbons. As a consumer market it still remains to be exploited. The importance of Central Asia to India is not merely civilizational and historical, but also geopolitical and economic. Central Asia has strategic importance to India. Having the Kashmir angle, India cannot be walled off from the political developments which take place in the Central Asian region. Pakistan in its northwest continues to be antagonistic towards India. Pakistan is already sponsoring cross-border terrorism in Kashmir.Peace and stability in CARs and Afghanistan appear to be the most crucial factor for India's security. There is already a realization of religious extremism and terrorism. In spite of India's current under-involvement in CARs; these countries offer great opportunities, which if availed would help in consolidating India's short and long-term foreign policy goals in this region. One of the important areas for India in CARs is the oil and gas sector. This is because energy security is a basic requirement today. Central Asia can be a future source of energy for India.In the 21st century, Central Asia would most probably become an important region (Roy, 2009).

India and Turkmenistan are closely connected with each other, from very early times both the countries have shared historical and civilizational ties. India had close links with the present day Turkmenistan since Kushan Empire (Kundu, 2012). In Indo-Central Asian relations with the Turkmenistan have played very important and historical role that constitutes the most significant aspect of cultural heritage of both these countries in Middle age. The contacts between Indians and Turkmenistan in Various fields of material, culture and art, and architecture at population level facilitated by various Sultans and also been a source of a great historical progress in formation of the cultural heritage of Turkmenistan in medieval times(Hangloo, 2000).

In the 17th century, Mughal Prince Shah Jahan built 14 gates in New Delhi, which is the capital of India, one of which was named in the honor of the Turkmen.In Aligarh, the second Turkmen Gate was built and the nearby town is still known as Turkmen Town. On the way towards the city of Aligarh we can still find a place of Bairam Khan and a well-known village of Khan-Khanawhich is named after Abdurahim Khan-i-Khanan. All these factors underline the age-old linkages between India and Turkmenistan. The new period of contacts between these two states were since August 15, 1947. In the first Inter-Asian Conference organized in Delhi in March-April 1947, the delegation from Turkmenistan were also invited. India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru accompanied by his daughter Indira Gandhi visited Ashgabat on June 14, 1955. This visit left fairly deep memories. Since their visit to Turkmenistan, hundreds of girls have been named after Indira Gandhi. Diplomatic relationship between the two countries was set on 20th April 1992, with the first visit of the then President of Turkmenistan SaparmuratNiyazov to India. India opened its Embassy in Ashgabat on January 1994. One year later the diplomatic mission of Turkmenistan was established in New Delhi. In 1995, Indian Prime Minister Mr. NarasimhaRao visited Turkmenistan. From time to time, various Ministerial level visits have been regularly happening between the two countries (Kundu, 2012).During the visit in 2015, Prime Minister of the Republic of India NarendraModi, the two Leaders expressed satisfaction at the continued development of bilateral relations based on deep-rooted civilizational, historical and cultural linkages, and at the increase in high-level exchanges between the two countries in recent years (Ministry of external affairs India, 2015).

**Cultural relation :**

The leaders underlined that cultural exchanges have made an important and positive contribution to the development of comprehensive cooperation between the two countries and to deepening the

bonds of friendship and mutual understanding between their peoples.The Leaders noted the recent successful Turkmen cultural festival in India in 2014 and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) 'Namaste Turkmenistan' festival in various parts of Turkmenistan this year and called for similar events to be held in future as well (Ministry of external affairs India, 2015). A 30-member Turkmen Cultural Troupe visited India, New Delhi and Jaipur, from 12 to 18 October 2014 to participate in Days of Turkmen Culture in India. The first International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Ashgabat on 21 June, 2015. The Minister of Health Care and Medical Industry, Mr. Amannepesov Nurmuhammet Kakabayevich addressed the participants and talked about the importance of Yoga in the day-to-day lives of people and how it helps overcome disease and illness. They will further strengthen cooperation by setting up a Yoga Centre in Ashgabat.At present there are about 849 Indians nationals in Turkmenistan, comprising junior engineers or technicians who are working in oil and gas industry and construction workers (Embassy of India, 2015).

Turkmen Airlines runs two flights every week between Delhi and Ashgabat and weekly nine flights between Amritsar and Ashgabat. Turkmen Airlines is planning to start flights from Asghabat to Ahmedabad in near future.Bollywood film actor Raj Kapoor and his films are very popular till date in Turkmenistan. Many boys and girls are named after the Bollywood actors & actresses Raj and Nargis (Kundu, 2012).Indian films and TV serials are popular here with Turkmen people. Similarly, Indian music also holds a special place in the hearts of Turkmen people (Embassy of India, 2015).

ITEC(Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation)provides training for Turkmen nationals in India. In the year 2015-16, 20 ITEC slots were offered to them. In all, since the inception of the programme for Turkmenistan in 1994, a total of 345 Turkmen nationals have been trained in various courses. India provides ICCR Scholarships to students from Turkmenistan. Twenty ICCR scholarships are offered every year. There are approximately 100 Students from Turkmenistan pursuing various courses (Embassy of India, 2015).

**Economic relation :**

During the early years of Independence of Turkmenistan, India provided the necessary financial and other assistances to the Government of Turkmenistan. Joint venture between Turkmen and Indian pharmaceutical company Turkmenderman-Ajanta Pharma Ltd has been functioning very well in Ashgabat since its establishment in December 1998. India exports electronic goods to Turkmenistan, along with machinery ande equipments, silk products, meat products, woven apparel, pharmaceuticals, frozen meat and tyresand sugar. Exports from Turkmenistan to India are mainly raw cotton, five inorganic chemical, metal scrap etc. Turkmenistan is interested in promoting trade and investment relationship with India, as the latter's economy has grown rapidly even in the aftermath of the global financial crisis ( Kundu, 2012).Total trade for the year 2014-15 stood at US$ 105.03 million in India. Because of this, exports from India stood at US$ 91.98 million and imports by India at US$ 13.05 million with India registering a trade surplus of US$ 78.93 million in its favor(Embassy of India, 2015).Our trade turnover is much below its potential (Ahamed, 2015).

Two countries have already established mechanisms for boosting cooperation in various fields. IndiaTurkmenistan Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation has been meeting regularly since 2006. Simultaneously a Joint Working Group on Energy was also set up (Kundu, 2012). Calling TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) project as a significant initiative in relationship between the two countries, Modi talked about the possibility of land-sea route through Iran for the pipeline should be explored. A joint statement termed the TAPI project a 'key pillar' of economic engagement between India and Turkmenistan and said that both the leaders have recognized that its implementation would have a startling impact on trade(Press Trust of India, 2015).

The leaders welcomed the enhanced bilateral cooperation in the field of chemicals and

petrochemicals as well as the opening of 'ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL)' representative office in Turkmenistan (Ministry of external affairs India, 2015).'Together with the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran rail link, and India's proposed investment in Chahbahar Port in Iran, these initiatives will strengthen connectivity between our countries,' the Prime Minister said, noting 'As India deepens its relations with Central Asia, Turkmenistan will play a crucial role in it.' Modi said that the recently inaugurated three-nation railway line could be a linked corridor of the International North South Transport Corridor to streamline movement of goods and commodities between India and Turkmenistan and beyond, a joint statement issued after the talks said. The two leaders welcomed the Indian proposal to set up a urea production facility in Turkmenistan (The Indian express, 2015).

The territory of Turkmenistan was located at the crossroads of seven caravan routes and it became an important trade link between India, Central Asia and Europe from the very early times. India and Turkmenistan shares close political understanding between each other on key regional and international issues(Kundu, 2012).The significance of Turkmenistan as a gateway to other Central Asian countries and the Caspian region and have accepted to support each other's initiatives in increasing transport corridors and infrastructure to facilitate movement of goods. President of Turkmenistan has appreciated Government of India's efforts in promoting International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) for transportation of goods between India and Central Asia, including Turkmenistan and beyond and conveyed that Turkmenistan would consider becoming party to the above-mentioned Corridor. The Leaders welcomed the successful conclusion of the 5th meeting of the Turkmen-India Intergovernmental Joint Commission on trade, economic, scientific and technological cooperation, held in Ashgabat on April 8, 2015(Ministry of external affairs India, 2015).

**Security relation :**

The Prime Minister Mr. Modiidentified terrorism as a major threat facing the region and said, 'We have shared interest in a peaceful and stable Afghanistan and Central Asia. We have also common purpose in fighting with terrorism and extremism in our region'.It would also enable capacity-building and technical cooperation, thus imparting a new momentum to the bilateral partnership in the defensesector (Press Trust of India, 2015).They also agreed to step up efforts against cross-border threats such as terrorism, organized crime and illegal drug- trafficking. The Leaders welcomed the signing of the Defense Cooperation Agreement during the visit, which would provide a framework for intensifying bilateral defense and security cooperation through exchanges of high and mid-level visits, training and dialogue between the Ministries of Defense of the two countries and other relevant organizations (Ministry of external affairs India, 2015).

The leaders reiterated their commitment to strengthen regional as well as multilateral cooperation, including through enhanced interaction in the United Nations and other regional and international organizations of which they are members. The Sides will further strengthen cooperation in a multilateral format within the UN framework, maintain close interaction and coordination in order to create a favorable international environment for the development of the two countries (Ministry of external affairs India, 2015). Ashgabat supports India's permanent position in the U.N. Security Council. The two countries have shared stakes in a peaceful and stable Afghanistan (Zafar, 2012).

**Challenge :**

A lack of direct access is a hindrance that has been pointed out time and again. The situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan makes it nearly impossible to implement any route passing through these two countries (Ulbolsyn, 2011). The security and stability in Central Asia is important for India because of missing potential markets. Currently there are certain problems and issues, which could not be easily resolved. India has failed in becoming an important actor in Central Asia, both in the strategic and economic domains. India is absent from the 'new Great Game' because it is still a

relatively no influential actor (Malik and Mir, 2012). No Indians are settled in Turkmenistan as the local law does not permit citizenship to any foreigners. Therefore, there is no Indian Diaspora as such, in Turkmenistan. There has been a decline in number of Indian workers due to the completion of certain projects of foreign companies for which the Indians were working. There are no Indian Associations or Indian students in Turkmenistan (Embassy of India, 2015).

**Possibilities :**

There is ahuge scope for further multi-faceted cooperation and contact between India and Turkmenistan from economy and trade to culture, science, technology and education (Kundu, 2012). These are Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan railway line connecting these countries with Iran and the Persian Gulf. It will also link Kazakhstan with Turkmenistan and Gorgan in Iran. India wants that construction of Iran's Chahbahar port should happen that would provide direct access to India to Afghanistan and Central Asia without being dependent on Pakistan. These projects suggest that India should prioritize 'Look North' or 'Look Central Asia Policy' (Malik and Mir, 2012).Some important aspects which can help us to raise our bilateral relationship with Turkmenistan to a much higher pedestal in the years ahead: The proposed TAPI gas pipeline, Ashgabat is witnessing a construction boom. There are vast opportunities for Indian construction companies in Turkmenistan, India and Turkmenistan have an annual trade turnover limited to about US $ 50-60 million, India-Turkmenistan IT Centre, India, being an IT superpower,. North-South Railway Corridor Project, We are committed to the human resource development of friendly country Turkmenistan through our ITEC and ICCR scholarships, India cooperates with Turkmenistan at various international fora including the UN, United Nations Security Council (Ahamed, 2015).

## REFERENCES

Anderson, Kennth (2005). "Kenneth Anderson's Law Of War and Just War Theory Blog",[online web] Accessed on 10 Oct 2015 URL: http://kennethandersonlawofwar.blogspot.in/2005/12/one-line-definitions-of-foreign-policy.html

Ahamed, E. (2015)."India - Turkmenistan Relations: Two Decades of Diplomatic Ties",[online web] Accessed on 4 nov 2015 URL:http://eahamed.com/pdf/turkmenistan_function.pdf

Boekle, H., Rittberger, V. and Wagner, W. (2001). "Constructivist Foreign Policy Theory," in *German Foreign Policy Since Unification: Theories and Case Studies*, V. Rittberger, ed., Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Burchill, Scott and Linklater, Andrew (2005). "Introduction". In Scott Burchill et al. Theories of International Relations. Third Edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1-28

Doyle, Michael W. (2009). "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs", [online web] Accessed on 10 Oct 2015 URL:http://www.politics.ubc.ca/fileadmin/user_upload/poli_sci/Faculty/price/Debating_the_Democratic_Peace__Doyle.pdf

Embassy of India (2015). "India – Turkmenistan Relations", [online web] Accessed on 4 Nov 2015 URL: http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Turkmenistan_2015_07_02.pdf

Hangloo, R.L.(2000). "Indi-Turkmenistan Relation and The formation of Culture Heritage of Turkmenistan in Middle ages",[online web] Accessed on 4 nov 2015 URL:http://turkmeniya.tripod.com/id11.html

Keukeleire, Stephan and Simon Schunz (2008). "Foreign policy, globalization and global governance - The European Union's structural foreign policy",Paper prepared for the ECPR Standing Group on the European Union Fourth Pan-European Conference on EU Politics, Riga, 25-27 September 2008.,[online web] Accessed on 5 Oct 2015 URL: http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-riga/virtualpaperroom/102.pdf

Kundu, Nivedita Das (2012). "India and Turkmenistan Relationship: From Silk-Route Connection to the Contemporary Era", [online web] Accessed on 4 Nov 2015 URL:http://www.southandcentralasiacomment.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/India-Turkmenistan.pdf

Malik, Ishfaq and Mir, M. Afzal (2012). "India's Trade Relation with Kazakhstan: Challenges and Prospects", *Journal Of Research In Commerce & Management*. www.abhinavjournal.com Vol. **1** (12)

Ministry of external affairs India (2015). "Joint Statement between Turkmenistan and India during the Prime Minister's visit to Turkmenistan",[online web] Accessed on 4 Nov 2015 URL: http://mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/25456/Joint_Statement_between_Turkmenistan_and_India_during_the_Prime_Ministers_visit_to_Turkmenistan

Martin, Jan (2013). "Means, Goals, and Sources of Foreign Policy: The Case of Sweden", [online web] Accessed on 5 Oct 2015 URL: http://files.isanet.org/ConferenceArchive/94e642011ab54363ba728a207c8df795.pdf

Mohapatra, A.K. (2014). "Introduction Foreign Policy Analysis: A Conceptual Framework", [online web] Accessed on 10 Oct 2015 URL:http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/10603/15467/7/07_introduction.pdf

Moravcsik, Andrew (2001). "Liberal International Relations Theory: A Social Scientific Assessment",[online web] Accessed on 10 Oct 2015 URL: http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/wcfia/files/607_moravscik.pdf

Nel, P. (2006). "Theories of International Relations" in P. J. McGowan, S. Cornelissen and P. Nel (eds). *Power, Wealth and Global Equity: An International Relations Textbook for Africa(2nd ed)*. Cap Town: UCT Press.

Press Trust Of India (2015),"India, Turkmenistan sign seven agreements; PM Modi indicates for early operation of TAPI project", [online web] Accessed on 4 Nov 2015 URL: http://www.ibnlive.com/news/world/india-turkmenistan-sign-seven-agreements-pm-modi-indicates-for-early-operation-of-tapi-project-1019132.htmlBat

Roy, Meena Singh (2009). "India's Interests in Central Asia",[online web] Accessed on 4 Nov 2015 URL:http://www.idsa-india.org/an-mar-9.01.html

The Indian express (2015). "India, Turkmenistan ink 7 pacts; agree to combat terrorism together", [online web] Accessed on 4 Nov 2015 URL:http://indianexpress.com/article/india/indiaothers/indiaturkmenistan-ink-7-pacts-pm-modi-for-early-operation-of tapi/#sthash.yIdmubMx.dpuf

Ulbolsyn, Amrenova (2011). "Strategic partnership of Kazakhstan and India", [online web] Accessed on 10 Oct 2015 URL: https://boletimneasia.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/india-cazaquistc3a3o3.pdf

Viotti, P.R. and Kauppi, M.V. (1993). *International relations theory: realism, pluralism, globalism*. New York: Macmillan, 1993.

********