

New Dynamics of India's Foreign Policy Under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi Government

DASHARATH KUMAR

Assistant Professor

Department of Political Science, Dharam Samaj College, Aligarh (U.P.) India

ABSTRACT

India's foreign policy has changed dramatically since Narendra Modi assumed the post of Prime Minister in 2014. India's international interactions have been transformed under his administration as a result of his more forceful, realistic, and strategically focused diplomatic strategy. Modi's new approach to India's foreign policy includes an emphasis on economic diplomacy, strategic alliances, a greater regional engagement, and an active role in international governance. This work examines these changes by looking at significant policy changes, connections with important world powers, and India's changing position in international organizations. Additionally, the study looks at future challenges and opportunities for India's foreign policy.

Keywords: Neighbourhood, Cultural, Diaspora, Security, Diplomacy, Cooperation

INTRODUCTION

The key aspects of India's foreign policy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi have been examined in this piece. The cornerstone of every nation's national interest is its foreign policy. For every nation, national interest comes first. Each country develops its foreign policy with these national interests in mind. The Cold War brought about a significant shift in international relations, and with it came a shift in India's foreign policy. A significant shift in Indian politics occurs in 2014 when Narendra Modi takes office as the country's prime minister. Prime Minister Modi ji creates Indian foreign policy with the national interests of India in mind after taking office. Raising India to the status of a major world power is the primary goal of the Modi administration's foreign policy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy has prioritized strongly enforcing the Neighbor First Policy, Act East Policy, Cultural Diplomacy, Indian Self-Reliance, Making India a Global Economy, and Protecting India's National Security (Ganguly, 2016).

When governments change, it is commonly thought that the foreign policy of nations throughout the world does not alter much. Because a country's foreign policy is chosen and carried out in accordance with its national interests. The foundation of a nation is its foreign policy, not the policy of any political party or administration. Through which a country gets its strength. However, after many years, we see that the Bharatiya Janata Party's government has a complete majority in 2014. Shri Narendra Modi ji takes office as the Prime Minister of a powerful Indian government and carries out the foreign policy successfully. Now, there is a significant shift in Indian politics, and the influence of regional parties is also waning. Prime Minister Modi establishes a robust and autonomous foreign policy as soon as he ascends to Indian political authority. Prioritizing national interests, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made state visits to several nations throughout the globe and has made a significant contribution to improving international relations during his administration.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has given a new direction to India's foreign policy. The main objective of the Modi government's foreign policy has been to raise India as a power in global politics. After 2014, the foreign policy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government can be understood through the following dimensions (Kamath, 2014).

Neighbourhood First Policy:

India has been giving importance to its neighbours in its foreign policy from the very beginning. Since independence, India has strengthened its economic and strategic relations with its neighbours like Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. At the same time, it has maintained a relationship of *roti and beti* with a neighbouring country like Nepal. The sweetness and sourness in relations keep changing with time but neighbours cannot be changed. Neighbourhood First Policy can be considered as the main pillar of the foreign policy of the Modi government. Through this, the Modi government emphasized on effectively implementing the *Gujral* doctrine. Thus, through the Neighbourhood First Policy, the Modi government tried to express that India will make every possible effort to establish a better, cordial and friendly relationship with its neighbouring countries. Prime Minister Modi has tried to establish better and stronger economic, political and cultural relations with its neighbouring nations through his foreign policy. In the changing global order of international politics, India adopted the 'Look East' policy to promote economic activities with South-East Asian countries. India made this policy the main basis of its foreign policy to further strengthen relations with its smaller neighbouring countries under the '*Gujral* Doctrine'. In which it also worked on the policy of giving unilateral concessions to neighbouring countries, which can be understood in the context of the '*Farakka* Agreement'. In 2014, the current Modi government has given priority to the 'Neighbourhood First Policy' by maintaining the elements of continuity in foreign policy as well as making it more dynamic according to the current circumstances (Harsh, 2016).

By prioritizing global peace, friendship, and cordial relations, the 'Neighbourhood First' strategy also upholds the continuity elements in Indian foreign policy, where the priority of the *Gujral* doctrine has been acknowledged. The commitment to participate in the economic development and growth of neighbouring nations has been

reinforced by this policy. The goal of this endeavour is to establish friendly, solid relationships with all nations while avoiding giving preferential treatment to any specific political faction in any country. According to this, the present Modi administration is prioritizing the neighbouring nations and fostering investment and capacity-building initiatives in them without meddling in their domestic politics (Ranjan, 2018).

Act East Policy:

'Act East Policy' has been adopted by the Modi government to give a new direction to India's political, economic, and cultural relations with the eastern countries. 'Look East Policy' has been considered a mainstay of India's foreign policy. 'Look East Policy' was adopted in India's foreign policy after 1990. But while on one hand this policy created a global identity for Indian foreign policy, on the other hand, there have been many obstacles in its practical implementation. But the Modi government adopted the policy of Act East Policy to further strengthen its relations with the countries of East Asia

Cultural Diplomacy:

India has had a great cultural history from the beginning. Since the era of the Indus Valley Civilization, India has engaged in cultural interactions with other nations. Through its illustrious cultural legacy, India drew in foreign monarchs and absorbed them into its society. Cultural diplomacy has become a significant component of India's foreign policy under the Modi administration. Through cultural interaction, cultural diplomacy aims to promote India's rich cultural history, traditions, and ideals to the world and improve relations with other nations. In 2014, the Modi administration spearheaded the initiative of International Yoga Day at the UN. The UN proclaimed June 21 as 'International Yoga Day,' giving India's culture a new worldwide identity.

By using soft power policy, the Modi government has strengthened the image of India through cinema, music, dance, Ayurveda, and literature in Indian foreign policy. Through religious and spiritual diplomacy, Buddhism was presented as India's cultural heritage by the Government of India. India focused on developing Buddhist circuits and increasing engagement with Buddhist majority countries around the world. The Government of India developed religious places like Varanasi, Ayodhya and Kashi, the main pilgrimage sites

of India, and presented them as international religious tourist centers. Cultural diplomacy plays an important role in giving a strong foundation to the foreign policy of a country. In such a situation, India also made cultural diplomacy the main basis of its foreign policy. When Prime Minister Modi came to power, he made cultural diplomacy the main principle of India's foreign policy. This is a big success of the cultural diplomacy of the Modi government which has attracted the whole world towards India (Bhatnagar and Passi, 2016).

Economic Foreign Policy:

Economic policy is the main basis of the foreign policy of any nation. In such a situation, the Government of India is emphasizing on a strong economic policy in view of its national interests. The Modi government is giving special importance to the economy in foreign policy. India has tried to promote foreign direct investment from China, Japan, America.

The Modi government's economic foreign policy has prioritized attracting foreign investment, boosting India's economic growth rate, and enhancing India's position in the world. To allow these enterprises to enter India and maximize job and economic opportunities, foreign firms have been urged to establish manufacturing facilities there. India has raised the bar for foreign direct investment in a number of industries in order to facilitate foreign investment. Numerous nations and areas, notably those in Southeast Asia, have negotiated and signed free trade agreements. With nations like India-Japan, India-UAE, and India-South East Asian nations, commerce and investment have been boosted. India stressed energy security with Gulf nations like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar. India is fostering collaboration with nations such as France, the United States, and Russia in the areas of nuclear power and defense. Priority was placed on economic collaboration and connectivity with neighboring nations (Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka). The South Asian Regional Cooperation Organization was attempted to be revived. India's representation on global platforms like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund was enhanced. Through bilateral discussions and Global Investor Summits, every attempt is being made to attract more international investment (Bajpae, 2016).

Indian Diaspora Diplomacy:

Prime Minister Modi is attracting Indian diaspora to

invest in India by building strong relations with them in foreign policy. There is a large number of people of Indian origin living abroad. This has been considered very important for India's foreign policy. Prime Minister Modi directly addressed the Indian diaspora in Russia, America, United Arab Emirates and efforts are being made to connect them with India's interests. Indian diaspora plays an important role in foreign policy. Indian diaspora acts as a cultural, economic, and political bridge between India and other countries. Their role in India's foreign policy is very important. India is the largest remittance recipient in the world. Indian diaspora contributes significantly in sending foreign currency to India. NRIs invest in foreign direct investment and startups in India, which helps in the economic growth of the country. NRIs help in spreading India's culture, traditions and values abroad. Through this, they increase India's 'soft power' through the promotion of yoga, Bollywood, Indian food and festivals (Mukherjee, 2017).

The Indian diaspora is playing a politically and economically influential role in many countries, such as the US, the UK, and Canada. These communities help incorporate India's interests in the policies of these countries. NRIs hold high positions in the parliaments and governments of various countries, which strengthens bilateral relations with India. NRIs provide funds and material support during natural disasters, such as earthquakes and floods, or global crises (such as the COVID-19 pandemic). The Government of India makes the NRIs a part of foreign policy through the 'PravasiBharatiya Divas' and other programs. The diaspora supports India's case at international forums, such as for India's permanent membership in the United Nations. The Indian diaspora has emerged as a strategic asset for India. Their participation makes India's foreign policy more effective and inclusive at the global level. NRIs encouraged to invest and start up (Ahmed, 2019).

A new dimension in India-US relations:

The biggest change in the foreign policy of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi government has come in relations with America. Today India and America have emerged as the closest strategic partners. The United States has become India's largest financial partner today. Trade and investment between the two countries is more than \$ 170 billion. More than a hundred billion dollars in this is arms deals alone. Both countries have common interests in promoting global security, stability and

economic prosperity through trade, investment and connectivity. As a result of the growing economic relations between both India and America, America has emerged as India's largest trading partner at present.

A new relationship has begun between India and America, which is important for the geopolitics and global strategies of both. The growing relationship between India and America, both democratic countries, can be seen as a great friendship of the 21st century. This friendship and partnership has become even stronger as India's soft power grows in the US. The United States supports India's emergence as a major global power and promotion of a peaceful region. The 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue between the US Secretary of State and Defense and their Indian counterparts is the major dialogue mechanism between the United States and India. An effort has been made to enhance defense and cooperation between the two countries through 2+2 dialogue. Relations between the two countries, the United States and India, are constantly improving. The visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US in September 2019 and President Trump's visit to India in February 2020 have been characterized by high-level exchanges and were memorable in many ways and the US President's visit to India led to the signing of some important agreements between the two countries.

As far as the Far West, West Asia, Global South are concerned, apart from the neighborhood, India has made it clear that 'partnership with all, alliance with none.' The world saw this policy of the Modi government in the Russia-Ukraine war. Despite growing partnership with America and Europe, India did not accept the pressure to distance itself from Russia. Not only this, India openly declared on every platform that the West should stop thinking that its happiness and sorrow are the happiness and sorrow of the world (Andrew, 2015).

Conclusion:

In 2014, Shri Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister of India and with this he tried to give a new height to Indian foreign policy and increased India's identity in the global world. National security and military self-reliance along with economic development have been given main priority by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi government. India is a powerful nation in Asia, so the eyes of global countries are on India. The main goal of the foreign policy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been to establish India as a self-reliant and strong nation

in the overall region. As a result of which India is moving towards becoming a global superpower in the coming times. India has made its reputation as a powerful nation not only in South Asia but also in the global world. India is moving towards strengthening its political, economic and cultural relations with the countries of South East Asia under the 'Act East Policy'. India's foreign policy under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been multidimensional and diplomatically active. India not only tried to improve relations with its neighboring countries, but also strengthened its presence on global platforms. Economic and cultural relations with the Indian diaspora were strengthened. Apart from this, many important initiatives were also taken in the areas of defense, economic development and strategic balance. This is the goal of the Indian government in the coming time. However, challenges like tension with China and lack of permanent solution with Pakistan still persist, which is not considered good from the point of view of global diplomacy. But overall, the foreign policy of the Modi government has established India as a strong and influential global power.

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