

Determinants of India's Foreign Policy: An Analysis

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Abstract: Foreign policy of India is concerned with all relevant and important issues of international level like peace, disarmaments, climate change, human rights developments, justice etc. by which India as a state nation tries to control the behavior of other states through its basic principles. Therefore, if we want to study the foreign policy of India, firstly we need to know the fundamental determinants which provide the foundations for objectives and principals of foreign policy of India. Moreover, foreign policy making is a dynamic process. Normally change of governments does not change the fundamental principles of the foreign policy of India because all of them interact and determine the foreign policy. The present research paper highlights the basic determinants of India's foreign policy.

Keywords: Sovereignty, Public Opinion, International Organization, Territorial Integrity.

Introduction: Actually India's foreign policy is that part of national policy by which the state establishes their relations with the other sovereign states of the globe. Though all these states are the components of the international system and they are sovereign, independent and to a large extent cling to the idea of nationalism. Thus, the sovereignty of the states, their inter-dependence, and their domestic and international circumstances are the three elements which generate and determines the foreign policy and its direction. The first element is the sovereignty of the state which determines the principle of safeguarding the territorial integrity of the states. The element of interdependence necessitates the principle of bargaining in foreign policy as the state's endeavour to achieve the maximum possible advantage under all circumstances. The third element, the domestic and international circumstances adds the factor of realism. The foreign policy of all states is based on the



principle of territorial integrity and theory of bargaining.

Most of the foreign policy analysts assume the fact that it is the primary duty of a state to protect the property of its citizens and to safeguard their interests whatsoever they are. This duty also involves the concept of security of national boundaries and if necessary it occupies other alien parts of the territory. The state's aiming at the protection of their territory pursues the policy of status quo. The state's aiming at subjugating occupied or non-occupied territory may be named as pursuing the revisionist policy. The policy of safeguarding the interests of the citizens inside or outside, the state is known as policy of prestige in international relations. Inter-dependence of the states is an important phenomenon in international politics. All the states big or small are dependent on one another for one or the other reasons. This inter-dependence may result in conflict or cooperation so the states under these stresses endeavour to create a situation under which international behaviour may not be broken completely. Foreign policy strives to create such a

balance with bargaining for the protection of national interest.

Determinants of Foreign Policy: Like the other countries foreign policy of India is determined by the above mentioned general principles, but it cannot be denied that the states have their own specific interests which necessitate upon the states to adopt different types of foreign policies. These specific interests are termed as factors which help in shaping or reshaping foreign policy.

Internal Factors: The internal factors of India's foreign policy may be as under-

- **World Public Opinion:** The well known fact is that world public opinion shapes the foreign policy, provided it is clear and well shaped. It could be significant factor only in developed state. In developing or underdevelopment states either it does not reflect on foreign policy issues or it is too naïve to play a significant role. Studies of public attitudes conclude that the vast majority of people even in highly literate societies are

unknowledgeable, uninterested and apathetic with regard to most issues of world. Other studies suggest that government, university and private programmes that have sought to create wide public knowledge and appreciation of the complexities of international politics have seldom met with success. The strong opposition of the American public to the government's policy on Vietnam led Nixon to adopt a policy of gradual withdrawal of US forces from Vietnam. With Lord Strong, who was permanent under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, we may say that the public ventilation of issues of foreign policy may hamper the flexibility, resourcefulness and imagination of International relations.

- **National Capacity:** It means the military preparedness of state, its technological advancement and modern means of communication. The economic development and enlightened political institutions are also associated with the national

capacity. National capacity is the pivot of foreign policy. It determines as well as implements it. In fact, the foreign policy is directly associated with the national capacity. If the state increases its national capacity its foreign policy will need a big change. It will strive to achieve a status of distinction in international relations; if it decreases the state will have to compromise with its poor status. For example, at the end of Second World War Britain became a less powerful state in Europe as well as in the world. This change in national capacity has brought overwhelming diversions in British foreign policy in the era of globalization. Likewise, Modi government has reshaped its foreign policy according to the changing national capacity. Today, the US also has agreed to make a co-operation in economic and strategic field with India.

- **The Political Organization:** The fact is that internal political structure of a country plays an important role and it

impacts upon the country's approach to international affairs, as is evident from a comparison of the decision-making processes in an absolute monarchy or a dictatorship on the one hand and in a parliamentary democracy on the other. A despotic government has greater power, through censorship and the promulgation of regulations, to prevent the expression of undesirable opinions than a free government does. Indeed, the distinguishing mark of a free government is the very freedom allowed the citizens to express their options on public policy, domestic or foreign. There are besides, established institutions such as an elected parliament, political parties and a free press for the expression of opinion in the changing political environment. However, there are so many political parties and pressure groups in India that it is very difficult to believe whether these groups or parties can play a positive role in formulating foreign policy.

- **Social Structure:** It is evident that a homogeneous society makes stronger national unity and morale than a heterogeneous one, sharp division in society-divisions between rich and poor, divisions on the basis of religion, regional imbalances make it difficult for a government to count on that immediate and nation-wide cooperation from society. That is why; the government of India has to act on the basis of harmony with different segments of the society.

External Factors: These factors may include International Environment, International Organizations, World Public Opinion etc.

- **International Environment:** The multiplicity of attitudes and their interactions apart the difficulty of conducting foreign policy arise from the fact that a state has no sure means of controlling the behaviour of other sovereign states. It can persuade, promise or deny economic and military aid, it can threaten another state with the use of force and, nevertheless, it cannot be certain

the state will act in the way it desires. There is another source of difficulty. The world is continuously changing, new events and personalities create fresh foreign policy problems for all concerned. To select instances at random, the impact of the October Revolution of 1917, the rise of Communist Power in China in 1949, the rise of De Gaulle to power in France in the fifties and the emergence of new states in Asia and Africa since Foreign Ministers of the time. Yet it has been rightly said that there is both continuity and change in the foreign policies of all states, for every nation also has its history and its traditions. Recently, Modi government has also reshaped India's foreign policy according to the changing international environment.

- **International Organizations:** The 21st century is known as the blissful period for international organizations. Now the states have to take a note of international law, treaties and contracts so that their violation may

not jeopardize the policies. The Communist China, for a long time, showed utter disregard of these factors and consequently could not secure its due position in the field of international relations. Only after 1971 she recognized their importance and that move on the part of Communist China have introduced new dimensions in international relations. The cooperation through UNO is the basic principle of India's foreign policy. Therefore, India is an emerging power of global relations.

- **National Interests & National Values:** These are the aspirations of the state, which are to be achieved through foreign policy. The policy makers are governed by their respective national interests. National interests are the governing factors which loom large in diplomatic conferences, bilateral or multilateral. The interests of one nation necessarily not opposed to the interests of other states. States, in pursuing their national interest are bound to take into account universal

ideals and principles of internal national law and morality, such as peace, justice, keeping the nation's word, the sanctity of treaties and non-intervention in other nation's affairs, freedom and a decent standard of living for all men. Being a sovereign country, India has reshaped its foreign policy in the perspective of national interest and values.

- **Foreign Policy Objectives:** The concept of objective, which is essentially an image of a future state of affairs and future set of conditions that governments through individual policy makers aspire to bring about by wielding influence abroad and by changing or sustaining the behaviour of other states. If all the objectives of foreign policy are to be explained by one single word, that word is undoubtedly the National Interest, but this word is too ambiguous to lead us to any clear understanding. As a principle of the foreign policy of India, it has always been in practice.

- **World Public Opinion:** World public opinion is very dynamic element. Like a flicker of light it influences the foreign policies only too occasionally. Only if the domestic public opinion supports the world public opinion it becomes an important determinant of foreign policy. The establishment of democratic institutions, the increase in the standard of living, the scourge of First World War and expansion of education dare pursue the interests contrary to world public opinion. At least they will pursue only those interests which are not opposed to world public opinion. The opinion is a factor which faces many obstacles in crystallization. The first and foremost is the ideological division of the world in which the acting as good or bad of one part become naturally adverse to other part. Recently, Modi government has been very successful to create anti-terrorism public opinion and the reality of Pakistani propaganda has

been acknowledged by foreign policy analysts.

- **Policy Making Factors:** We know that the final shape of foreign policy is the handiwork of these elites. Policy makers define the situation not only in terms of conditions abroad, but also in terms of what is feasible bureaucratically. They receive information from various government agencies and the alternatives they consider are often alternatives that have been drafted and debated by lower officials of various government departments. The dictators generally try to change the public opinion in their favour through a controlled press. Leaders like Mussolini, Hitler, Mao-Tse-Tung and Ayub Khan have done the same. Generally the policy makers have to consider internal problems, public opinion, external circumstances and reactions of other states. In these tasks they are assisted by a number of departmental experts. In the construct of India, policy

makers also play a vital role in shaping foreign policy.

- **Foreign Office and Other Services:** In the state characterized by a highly developed foreign affairs bureaucracy, there are also unlimited possibilities for foreign officers, military organizations or intelligence agencies to take actions formulated independently by the top political leadership. In theory, the ministers make the policy and the permanent officials merely execute it, but in practice the officials formulate the policy and the ministers are only advice-sender. Neville Chamberlain clashed with the foreign office over his policy of appeasement; he removed Lord Vansittart from his post of Under Secretary. Nevertheless, where policies are less firm and clashes less pronounced the advice of the officials carries much weight. Foreign policy is not conducted by diplomacy alone, it relies heavily on the scientists who supply them with up to date weapons, on economists

and also especially today, on intelligence and propaganda services. In the world of today the weapons are not used, on the contrary, they are produced only to deter. Here the scientists start playing an important role. In the same manner, the governments have to rely upon the information rendered by the intelligence agencies. In Indian perspective, some officials of foreign ministry and foreign affairs play a significant role to construct the foreign policy in the changing global scenario.

Conclusion: To conclude we can say that foreign policy decisions cannot be taken without a reference to the reactions they produce elsewhere and disagreement among various sections of press regarding foreign policy issues restrict the role of press in India's foreign policy making. Lastly, audio-visual means of socio-political education like television, until the eighties being controlled by the state, lacked credibility and could hardly be a satisfying base for the effective influence of public opinion on foreign policy

making. Public opinion thus played a reinforcing role in the making of India's foreign policy. Not only the broad strategy of non-alignment, but also all issues relating to imperialism, racialism and military alliances have received the specific support of the Indian people. Today India is capable to build her relations on the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity. But we still need to be practical while reshaping our foreign policy.

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