



INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN A GLOBALISING WORLD

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School of Social Sciences
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INTRODUCTION

A look at the Course Contents conveys that it is a comprehensive course. It puts Indian foreign policy in the context of the world that is globalizing. The five Blocks cover as many as 15 Units. The Block-I consisting of four Units presents an indepth analysis of what goes on in the making of Indian foreign policy. The Block traces the thoughts from India's past and the ideas of the fathers of India's freedom struggle on the kind of foreign policy they had envisaged for the independent India. Values, principles, ideals and hard facts of geopolitics and geo-economics that go into the making of Indian foreign are described in Units 2 and 3. The Unit 4 is an interesting one: it describes the institutions and mechanisms including processes and actors that are engaged in decision- making. This is an insightful Unit as it describes the shift in the locus of decision-making from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to Prime Minister's Office (PMO) over the past seven decades. Block-II deals with India's policy towards three major powers namely, the USA, Russia and China. Contemporary India is at a historic juncture. Times are fortuitous. India is engaging all the major powers at one and at the same time. And, relationship with one great power is not at the expense of relationship with another. All the three great powers are India's strategic partners. India has differences but not dispute with them. Important to note are bilateral and trilateral mechanisms for dialogue with the three great powers – '2+2' India-US ministerial dialogue, India-Russia Annual Summit and informal summitry with China. Block-III covers relations with the South Asian neighbours. One Unit covers relations with Pakistan; the second Unit deals with rest of the South Asian neighbours. The Block-IV focuses on regions. Twenty-first Century is 'Asian Century'. Relations with East Asia and South East Asia have assumed a strategic dimension for the simple fact that it is a dynamic region in terms of trade and technology. India wants to join the region to become part of the global supply chains. This is necessary for India's domestic economic development. The region's dynamism is attracting great power competition presence in the oceans – western Pacific and Indian Ocean. Energy and large markets make Central Asia and West Asia crucial for India. Africa and Latin America are important as sources of raw materials and as large markets for Indian exports. The final Block-V delineates India's security, environmental and economic concerns in the globalizing world.

Two points need mentioning here: One, each writer of the Unit has his/her own perspective in writing the Unit. Two, availability of the source material makes a writer limit the Unit to a specific period or to some specific dimensions. As the Editor, what I have done is write on Indian foreign policy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After the general election in 2014, BJP-led NDA formed the

government. The present Introduction constitutes an important complement to all the Units. It updates the themes covered in the course. You get a comprehensive view of Indian foreign policy in the context of a globalizing world. It would benefit you if go through this Introductory note while reading rest of the Course.

INDIA IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

How does one view *'India's foreign policy in a globalizing world'*? India has been an enthusiastic participant in global affairs since independence – participating in UN and all its activities and upholding international rules and norms. However, there were constraints in the first five decades following independence. India had limited capabilities; it could not do much in global affairs. Great powers dominated and set the agenda for global peace and security. India often found itself on the margin of international decision-making. It was more of a rule-taker than a rule-maker in the post-Second World War global order. India chose the path of Non-alignment – a voice of reason and autonomy in a world dominated by power politics. This was the best way of remaining engaged. Besides, independent India inherited a complex neighbourhood. There were wars and border disputes with the neighbours. Non-alignment was of no help in dealing with security matters in South Asia. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister had realized it early. Independent India had to craft a different approach to deal with China, Pakistan, Nepal and other neighbours.

Indian foreign policy has gone through various phases. The latest phase began in 1991; and that is the focus of the present Course. Cold War ended with the disintegration of Socialist bloc and Soviet Union itself in 1991. Economic globalization gathered speed in the early 1990s. New technologies of Information, communication and transportation facilitated globalization of national economies. India also launched liberalization of its economy in 1991. These global and national-level changes demanded that India get out of the old ways of thinking and doing things; and adopt a foreign policy that served its national interest. There was demand for greater activism and contributions to global governance.

The outcomes of global and national changes of the past three decades are clear: India has risen in global affairs as a contributor and a leader. Indian economy has registered high and sustained growth rates for more than 25 years. Today it is one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing economies in the world. The country's leadership is acknowledged in areas such as climate change, fight against terrorism and religious militancy, non-proliferation, disaster management and reforms in global governance.

United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other international institutions that mostly were established after the end of the Second World War in 1945 and the large number of international legal norms that were written for international relations established, what came to be called, the Liberal International Order (LIO). This is not to deny that the roots of LIO go far back in history.

India has been a beneficiary of the Liberal International Order. International economic and trade institutions and laws have helped Indian economy grow – more so at a rapid rate in the past 25 years. The country did face several wars but on the whole, the LIO has ensured national security and facilitated India's rise as an 'emerging' power. No denying, the Non-aligned India also contributed to the maintenance of the global order. In the era of Cold War, India supported UN and its working, contributed to international peacekeeping and by gave leadership to the Non-aligned and developing countries. However, it is to be noted that, while being a beneficiary and a contributor, India has also been a critic of the Liberal International Order. India opposed the domination of great powers – their bloc politics and arms race. It criticized the use of force, interventions and violations of the principles of state sovereignty. It called for the reform and revision of the global order so as to make global institutions open and inclusive. The noted specialist on Indian foreign policy C. Rajamohan describes India as a 'revisionist' power.

The international system during Cold War was a stable one – dominated by the two super powers. Post-Cold War, international system has not broken down but the system is in a flux. It is not able to take firm action against threats to international peace and security. Besides, there are important changes in the global order. Some of these changes are of more recent years and need to be analyzed.

One important change that has come about is the relative decline of the US, and the West in general, and the rise of China, and Asia in general. More so in the past one decade, the trend towards multipolarity has become prominent. Multipolarity is being made possible by the rise of 'emerging' powers. Powers such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa that have come under the BRICS banner are pushing for a multipolar order. BRICS grouping signifies the geopolitical shift in the global balance of power. It has come on the back of economic and technological shifts from West to the East. The present century, it is concurred, is the 'Asian Century'. Rise of China, other East Asian economies, India and South East Asia in economic and strategic terms is irreversible. Liberal international order is required to adjust to these tectonic shifts in global politics and economy. Reform in the institutions of global governance therefore cannot be postponed any further; and India remains a vocal leader calling for these reforms. India is a reformer; it is not a revolutionary power. India does not want an overhaul or overthrow of the existing global order. It

wants the global order to become democratic – open and inclusive. It demands more say and its own membership in institutions of global governance – UN Security Council, International Monetary Fund, Nuclear Suppliers Group, etc. Indian foreign policy has been critical of new norms that have been promoted by the Western powers – ‘humanitarian intervention’, ‘democracy promotion’ and regime change in the name of international “Responsibility to Protect’ (R2P). India and other rising powers uphold norms of respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and freedom to choose the development path.

A significant change noticed in the past some four years is the rise of anti-globalization sentiments. US under President Donald Trump, Britain under the Conservative Party rule and several European countries have become nationalist and protectionist. They oppose free trade, climate conservation, and the role of UN in maintenance of international peace and security. The anti-globalization trends are not in India’s economic interests. India economy benefits through export of goods and services to other countries. These fluid and uncertain circumstances call upon India to further raise its role in global affairs. The point here is that as India’s stakes rise higher, it would be required to undertake more responsibility in global affairs. What are the implications? It may mean getting involved in thankless disputes between far-away countries; it could also mean committing large material and human resources to international causes of little interest to India. Should India do it? Does it have those kinds of resources and capability? Should India choose global commitments over its domestic needs and development? How much of ‘hard’ power can India project beyond its border? Does it have required institutional and bureaucratic capability to project its influence abroad? Military threats on its borders and internal security challenges persist. These are the constraints. One thing is clear: henceforth, choices may not be easy for the ‘rising’ power India. Indian foreign policy henceforth will find it tough to maintain balance between its claim, capability and commitment. All the while, the country has immense ‘soft’ power to offer. These issues are under debate. In nutshell, India is an active participant yet a critic of the world order. It is simultaneously a stakeholder and a challenger. It is a leader too: India is at the centre of action on climate change, terrorism and radicalism, and reform of the international institutions of governance. India has limited capability; yet the ‘rising’ power is redefining its engagement with the globalizing world. The immediate neighbourhood of South Asia and Indian Ocean draws most of India’s strategic attention and resources. South Asia is its natural habitat. Priorities in neighbourhood and resource constraints might make India confine itself to the world of Indo-Pacific and South Asia. Be that as it may, the world of Indian foreign policy remains ever changing. As India changes, it would also significantly change the globalizing world.

UNIT 1 – EVOLUTION OF INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY

Structure

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1.2.1 Indian Freedom Movement and the Foreign Policy Values

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

The present Unit maps the trajectory of the evolution of India’s foreign policy – its values, norms and practices – over the years. After reading this Unit, you would be able to

- Understand the genesis of India’s foreign policy including its roots in the freedom movement;
- Appreciate the evolution of Indian foreign policy through different phases; and
- Critically examine the working of Indian foreign policy over the years

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The story of the evolution of India’s foreign policy begins with the pre-independence period when Indian National Congress decided in 1932 to have a foreign policy department under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru with Ram Manohar Lohia as its secretary. As a matter of fact, no country in the world can afford to have an isolationist policy preference in its dealings with rest of the world given the complex nature and working of international relations. Such a situation holds more true in the case of countries like India that have always looked upon themselves as active

participants in the global affairs with the objective of not only serving their national interest but also as conscience-keepers of collective wisdom and the pursuits towards the well-being of humankind. Moreover, in the case of India, there have been a number of factors that seems to have persuaded the country to evolve a definite and comprehensive foreign policy. For instance, sheer size of the country, its rich diversity, historical and cultural relations, existence of a large number of countries in the near and not-so-distant neighbourhood as well as expectations of a majority, if not all, of the countries from Asia and Africa to provide a formidable voice to their concerns along with the global vision and outlook of its leaders – have all tended to make the country an important player in the international politics.

In analysing the evolution and working of India's foreign policy at different periods of time, two inter-related tendencies could be identified that acted as its signposts. One, in providing for the evolutionary framework of India's foreign policy especially during its formative years in the post-independence period, moralistic overtones and global concerns seemed to have taken precedence over the sheer imperatives of national interests. In other words, the idealist rather than the Realist perspective of international politics has been at the core of India's foreign policy during its early phase. In its urge to provide leadership to the mass of newly-independent countries of Asia and Africa, India tended to mould its foreign policy in quite ambivalent mode than having a sharply focused perspective aimed at serving national interests at any cost. The disastrous impact of such a foreign policy in terms of both losing a decisive war as well as other compromises on national interests is apparent to see. Two, in the post-Nehru years, the conduct of India's foreign policy has been underpinned by harsh realities of national and global politics, apart from the personal preferences of the leaders at the helm of country's foreign policy at a particular period of time. For instance, though Non-alignment has been the core of India's foreign policy ever since the country gained independence, it was compromised to a large extent, if not shelved altogether, by signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1971. Thus, despite the permanence of national interests of the country, the foundational principles and operational dynamics of India's foreign policy of India has not showed that degree of permanence and consistency.

1.2 GENESIS OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

During the long years of British rule in India, the colonial government did not hesitate to push India in the vortex of global politics in order to serve the national interests of Great Britain. In other words, despite not having much at stake in the working of international relations during the first half of the twentieth century, India was invariably made a party in the international relations ostensibly with the purpose of strengthening the British position on vital issues. The interesting fact in this context is that

quite often the professed position of British rulers articulated on behalf of India appeared to be in contravention with the conventional wisdom and philosophical moorings that have characterized India's vision of world since a long time. Hence, after initial inhibitions, Congress appeared convinced to create a department of foreign affairs in its organizational structure in order to take a definite and considered stand on important issues and challenges facing the international community at that time. This may be considered as the first step towards evolution of India's foreign policy as Jawaharlal Nehru started articulating stand of the Congress on important international issues independent of the announcements of the colonial government. With the strengthening of national movement and greater involvement of Congress in running the affairs of the country, the stage appeared set for enhanced role for the country in international relations. An important example in this context may be seen in the case of India's participation in deliberations at San Francisco towards finalization and signing of the United Nations Charter in the wake of the conclusion of Second World War.

Towards the end of colonial rule in India when Jawaharlal Nehru was made the interim Prime Minister of the country, his foreign policy perspectives became more sharp and categorical. For instance, in a broadcast on 7 September 1946 on basic guiding principles of India's foreign policy in the years to come, his idealistic vision was at its best. He tried to synchronise the basic elements of national interests of the country with the pressing issues of the international politics of the time in such a way that national interests appeared hyphenated to the more important challenges such as end of colonialism, imperialism, racism, apart from Non-alignment from the power blocs and greater friendship and solidarity amongst the newly emerging nations of Asia and Africa. He went to the extent of evolving a one sided plan of close friendship with neighbours especially China even without caring for matching reciprocity on the part of the giant neighbour. Lofty idealistic principles became so pronounced in Nehru's vision of India's foreign policy that he tended to forget that the arena international politics is just like a jungle while mighty and ambitious nations devour their neighbors even without an iota of remorse or regret for their sinister designs.

1.2.1 Indian Freedom Movement and the Foreign Policy Values

India's civilizational values, its philosophy and culture and the history and heritage of the past several centuries, all have contributed to the formation of an Indian world-view. Of courses, there are paradoxes and puzzles in this long philosophical and intellectual heritage about the place and role of India in the world.

Coming to more modern times, the British colonial rule did shape India's world-view in several important ways: First, leaders of the freedom struggle perceived India's own freedom as being an intrinsic part of the freedom of all other colonized people in Africa and Asia. It was strongly

believed that India must become catalyst for the freedom of all other colonial people. India's own freedom would remain under threat so long as colonialism and racism dominated rest of Asia and Africa. Secondly, Indian freedom movement was based on the values of *ahimsa*, *satyagraha*, and *swadeshi*. Its foreign policy could not have betrayed these articles of faith. Thirdly, India's freedom struggle was a popular movement. The struggle for freedom had brought people – different castes, linguistic groups and communities – into a single unifying national movement. The partition of Bengal in 1905 had greatly agitated the masses. Leaders like Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi viewed freedom movement as popular movement. Over decades, millions participated in protests and resisted the repression and brutalities of the British administration. Fourthly, out of this long struggle emerged certain values, which the entire nation continues to cherish even today: these are the values of equality, non-discrimination, freedom, social justice and development for all the peoples and the nations. Mahatma Gandhi had witnessed racism and apartheid work in South Africa; he was witness to the racial discrimination and inhuman conditions in which Indian indentured labour worked and lived in South Africa. The values that came out of the freedom movement became the guiding principles of Indian foreign policy.

Broadly outlined, such were the circumstances and perceptions which made Mahatma Gandhi and others consider India's struggle as being part of the larger struggle of all the colonized and subjugated people for freedom and independence. "We are particularly interested," proclaimed Jawaharlal Nehru on 7 September 1946 while outlining India's world-view, "in the emancipation of colonial and dependent countries and peoples." He highlighted yet another principle of India's evolving world-view – principle which remains a central norm of Indian foreign policy since independence. Nehru said: "We repudiate utterly the Nazi doctrine of racialism, wheresoever and in whatever form it may be practiced." The world-view developed during the freedom movement was not one of isolation but of active engagement with all on grounds of equality, freedom and sovereignty. Nehru laid yet another principle of foreign policy when he said that independent India will not sever all of its links with the British Commonwealth. An underdeveloped Indian economy could not have cut off all its ties with Great Britain and other English-speaking countries. These economic and trade ties were more than one hundred year old; and independent India needed support of the other Commonwealth for its economic development. In addition, India had close defence ties with Great Britain. Nehru told the Constituent Assembly: "Largely our military apparatus has been influenced by these considerations and we have grown up naturally as something rather like the British Army..... If we break away completely, the result is that without making sufficient provision for carrying on in a different way, we have a period of gap...."

1.2.2 Indian National Congress and the Evolution of India's World-view

British colonial state apparatus, judicial system, an all-India civil service and administrative structure, the census system that enumerated different caste and religious identities, introduction of railways, postal system, a taxation system, introduction of new agricultural crops and setting up of textile mills and factories – all had a unifying effect on India. These changes contributed to the rise of the 'Indian' consciousness and the idea of India as a nation. Indian National Congress itself was the outcome of this growing national consciousness.

Indian National Congress regularly took up international issues for deliberations in its annual sessions. Over time, there evolved the idea of India's world-view about nationalism and internationalism. In 1919, Mahatma Gandhi had come out in support of the restoration of Khilafat in Turkey. Mahatma Gandhi combined an international issue viz. the demand to restore the Caliph of Ottoman Empire with the Non-Cooperation movement which was launched in opposition to the British repression such as the Rowlatt Act and the massacre at Jalianwallah Bagh. In 1920, during the Nagpur Session of the Indian National Congress, Mahatma Gandhi linked the proposal of *Swaraj* with the Khilafat demands; and adopted the non-cooperation plan to accomplish the twin objectives.

As far back as 1921, the 36th Annual Session of the Indian National Congress, held in Ahmedabad under the presidency of Hakim Ajmal Khan, had decided to have a resolution on international developments. Mahatma Gandhi said on the occasion: "Indeed, while we are maturing our plans for *Swaraj*, we are bound to consider and define our foreign policy. Surely, we are bound authoritatively to tell the world what relations we wish to cultivate with it."

The 1938 Hariपुरa Session had resolved to enunciate and incorporate the two cardinal principles viz. universal disarmament and collective security as part of Indian foreign policy at a time when the country was still about a decade away from full freedom. These two principles continue to remain the cornerstone of Indian foreign policy. The Resolution read: "The people of India desire to live in peace and friendship with their neighbours and with all other countries, and for this purpose wish to remove all causes of conflict between them.... A free India will gladly associate itself with such an order and stand for disarmament and collective security." The Resolution went on to note that neither universal disarmament nor collective security is possible under conditions of colonial domination and imperialistic hegemony. The resolution noted that "In order, therefore, to establish world peace on an enduring basis, imperialism and exploitation of one people by another must end."

The 55th Session held in Jaipur in 1948 had the Resolution which declared that Indian National Congress is committed to the goals of promotion of world peace, freedom of all the nations, racial equality and the ending of imperialism and colonialism. After India became independent, the ruling Indian Congress continued to pass resolutions in its annual sessions on India's world-view and

international developments.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discuss the genesis of India’s foreign policy.

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1.3 NEHRU’S PERIOD

Jawaharlal Nehru is considered the architect of India’s foreign policy. As the Prime Minister and first foreign minister of the country for a fairly long period of time, he gave such doctrinal as well as operational shape to the niceties of country’s foreign policy whose impacts are felt even after seventy years of independence. There is a view that Nehru was an idealist to the core. And, therefore, the foreign policy that he visualized for the country appeared to be more in sync with his moralist world vision than suited to meet the core national interests of the country. Since Nehru had already asserted India’s strong commitment for Afro-Asian solidarity amidst the onslaughts of the West, the natural corollary of such a stance would surely have been anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, and greater cooperation amongst the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa. At the same time, when India became independent, international politics was beset with the dark clouds of Cold War which had started engulfing more and more nations. In such a situation, Nehru obviously joined hands with other nations, particularly Egypt, Indonesia and Yugoslavia to evolve the policy of Non-alignment. Non-alignment, conceptually, stands for independence of the developing countries in taking autonomous decisions vis-à-vis global issues and challenges irrespective of the positions taken by either of the two power blocs. Thus, with regard to international relations, Non-alignment, along with its concomitant features, became the doctrinal foundation of Indian foreign policy. Apart from that, staunch belief in the virtues and capabilities of the United Nations as the conscience keeper of international peace and security, in addition to provide for pacific resolution of international disputes, also formed an important aspect of India’s foreign policy. The decision to refer the Kashmir issue to

the UN Security Council in 1948 was taken in accordance with that conviction on the part of Nehru. As far as India's relations with her neighbours are concerned, India's foreign policy during Nehru's period was underpinned by the doctrine of '*panchsheel*'. This policy stands for five cardinal principles which would govern India's conduct with its neighbours. These principles are: respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-aggression towards each other; non-interference in the internal affairs of each other; mutually beneficial relations based on equality; and peaceful co-existence. For Nehru, *panchsheel* was an article of faith and he believed that the neighbours of India, particularly China, would also adhere to the principles of *panchsheel* in letter and spirit. Such an understanding of China's behaviour on the part of Nehru did cost India dearly when she lost her war with her giant neighbour in 1962. Thus, during its formative years, India's foreign policy was more influenced by personal idealism and socialist commitments of Nehru than an unrelenting urge to safeguard the national interests of the country amidst the harsh realities of international politics.

1.3.1 'Nehruvian Consensus'

Scholars and experts on Indian foreign policy do talk of 'Nehruvian Consensus'. 'Nehruvian Consensus' was built around the ideals and principles that had developed in the course of India's struggle for freedom. Anti-racism, anti-apartheid, anti-imperialism were the values that came from Gandhian world-view. Mahatma Gandhi had taken the struggle for freedom beyond mere political freedom: for him political freedom was the tool to attain moral and cultural freedom and regeneration of Indian society and civilization. Nehru had imbibed these Gandhian values and aspirations and combined them with the idea of a modern India – sovereign and independent on the course of rapid economic development to emancipate its people from poverty and hunger and an India that would occupy its rightful place in the comity of nations. Strengthening of multilateral institutions and international law, collective security, diplomacy and dialogue in place of war and coercion, peaceful settlement of disputes, disarmament, non-intervention and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of a nation were, among others, the principles that came to guide India's relations with other countries. Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose and Rabindranath Tagore all had closely watched the intense ideological and political struggle between democracy, socialism and fascism in the period between the two world wars. International relations were being governed between the two world wars by the use or threat of use of brute force; Nehru came to reject this brand of brute power politics. Nehru understood early that the end of the Second World War meant living with the same norms of power politics and use of brute force to settle international matters. He foresaw the working of the same norms behind the unfolding Cold War rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union – hence Nehruvian insistence on pursuing the path of Non-alignment.

While some scholars describe Non-alignment as idealism and empty moralism. Many others regard Non-alignment as based on hard-headed Realism. It was the Realist response of a large-sized country capable of providing leadership to the developing world but which did not have the material capabilities of a great power as yet. India was one country which had refused to bow to the Cold War exigencies of the two super powers and refused to join their ideological blocs and military alliances. In the midst of Cold War, the Nehruvian Non-alignment was the voice of reason and independence where the two superpowers were asking the developing countries to choose sides. Non-alignment was the rejection of power politics, bloc politics, proxy wars, military alliances and arms race.

It remains a matter of debate among scholars to view Nehru as an idealist who sought to base Indian foreign policy on certain ideals; or as a Realist who accorded high importance to diplomacy in order to circumvent the dangers of Cold War and a bipolar world. By grounding Indian foreign policy into the concept of Non-alignment, Nehru had called for changes in the way international system worked and simultaneously guarded India's perceived national interest. Non-alignment ensured autonomy in foreign policy – a precept India continues to hold dearly.

Be that as it may, the 'Nehruvian Consensus' dominated Indian foreign policy in terms of its goals and tools as well as India's world-view for nearly two decades after independence. In an age of bloc politics, arms race, spheres of influence and proxy wars, it was the Non-aligned perspective that guided Indian world-view. The Nehruvian perspective gave India a fairly comprehensive and coherent a view of world affairs and India's place therein.

The debate on 'Nehruvian Consensus' remains unresolved. For some, India's Non-aligned stance in the 1950s and 1960s was highly pragmatic and strongly Realist. This was the best a developing country, saddled with the tasks of national integration, a pluralist democracy and planned economic development could and would have achieved. Votaries of Non-aligned framework argue that Nehruvian approach secured for India autonomy in external affairs and successfully contained the threat of Cold War engulfing India. A Non-aligned stance allowed India to seek US help in India's industrialization and in meeting food shortages while building good relations with Soviet Union. India maintained relations with Pakistan without compromising its stance on the issue of Jammu & Kashmir at a time when Pakistan was a key member of the US-led Baghdad pact. With China, Nehru worked out the *panchsheel* principles and the period of *Hindi-Chini bhai bhai* served national security interests. By rallying the developing world in UN and other international organizations, India was able to impact the way international system worked and brought significant changes in international norms and values. Critics however continue to identify the shortcomings of the 'Nehruvian Consensus'. They say it idealistic and cut off from the harsh realities of international

relations. Nehru ignored national security and led India into defeat in the 1962 India-China war. By 1970s, there were significant changes in the international landscape. For one, the international space that allowed existence of Non-alignment and Nehruvian global diplomacy had shrunk. Cold War had become very intense and nuclear build-up had given birth to the threat of ‘mutually assured destruction’ (MAD). The two super powers themselves were looking for some sort of reduction in their mutual hostility and antagonism through détente. India’s domestic capabilities had also changed by the 1970s. Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi was more of a pragmatist and a practitioner of Realism. She found that times have changed; it was the world of ‘realpolitik’ in the 1970s. More noteworthy, India’s capabilities had grown in terms of military, economic and strategic capabilities. It was a more confident India that went ahead with the signing of the Indo-Soviet defence treaty in 1971; followed it up with the liberation of Bangladesh and, finally, the Pokharan nuclear tests of 1974. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had changed the mental world-view of India. In a show of diplomatic and political dexterity and acumen, she was able to enlist the support of the entire Non-alignment Movement and the Soviet Socialist bloc in the cause of Indian foreign policy. These changes brought the curtain down on the ‘Nehruvian Consensus’ on India’s foreign policy. The consensus on India’s international outlook and foreign policy choices broke down in the 1970s.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) Describe and discuss ‘Nehruvian Consensus’.

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1.4 INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY DURING COLD WAR

This section covers the evolution and development of Indian foreign during the major period of Cold War in the post-Nehruvian era. During this period, India’s foreign policy was conducted under the

overall guidance of five Prime Ministers – Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Rajiv Gandhi. After the passing away of Nehru, Shastri became the Prime Minister of India. Though Shastri's term as Prime Minister was too short to leave any lasting mark on the march of India's foreign policy, his tenure was eventful enough to be missed out in discussing the evolution of India's foreign policy. Similarly, given that Shastri was part of Nehru government that had steered India's foreign policy by that time, conjecturally, it might be argued that he would not have effected major changes in the foreign policy of the country even if he had stayed as Prime Minister for longer times. Anyway, loss of India in the Indo-Chinese war had given an impression, especially in Pakistani army circles that India had turned terribly weak after the war. Therefore, a skirmish that erupted between Indian and Pakistani forces in the Rann of Kutch was escalated to a full-fledged war by Pakistan in 1965. In such a situation, Shastri showed exemplary courage to boost the morale of somewhat demoralized Indian army that eventually resulted into decisive victory of India in the war. Though post war peace parleys at Tashkent did not go well for India and Shastri passed away on the foreign soil, his formidable leadership of India during a period of crisis makes him a heroic figure in both domestic and foreign affairs of the country.

Indian foreign policy witnessed major breaks with the 'Nehruvian Consensus' including Non-alignment and *panchsheel* during the reign of Indira Gandhi. Initially, after succeeding Shastri as Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi continued with the traditional format of conducting India's foreign relations. But the limitations of Nehruvian mores of Indian foreign policy became acutely apparent to her during the disturbances in the then East Pakistan and India's tactical response to those circumstances. Mrs. Gandhi was quite clear that India's socialistic preferences had already created apprehensions in the minds of the Americans, especially Nixon Administration. In such a situation, she was apparently left with no option than to compromise, if not shelve altogether, the policy of Non-alignment and align with the Soviet Union. Eventually, India signed a Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union in 1971. In accordance with the provisions of this Treaty, Soviet Union came to rescue of India both in times of Indo-Pakistan War as well as in the UN Security Council. Thus, Indira Gandhi carried out a paradigm shift in the foreign policy of India by attuning it to serve the national interests of the country; and moved it away from Nehruvian idealism. After the Indo-Pakistan War, she signed the Shimla Agreement with her Pakistani counterpart Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and tried to bring the Kashmir issue back from the purview of UN Security Council to that of bilateral negotiations between the two countries. She also went on to dismantle perceived Nehruvian utopia of India remaining a non-nuclear nation for the sake of international peace and security. Accordingly, she valiantly witnessed India exploding her first nuclear device at Pokharan in 1974 to give a message to the world and her neighbours, especially China that India could no longer be taken

as a nation in slumber. Thus, India's foreign policy during the tenure of Indira Gandhi, for the first time, exhibited the traits of Realist premises of foreign policy in which the national interests of a nation matters most, over and above any other consideration, local or global.

Around two years of Janata Party rule under the Prime Ministers Morarji Desai and Charan Singh remained, by and large, uneventful insofar as foreign policy of the country was concerned. After coming to power, though Desai government asserted its opposition to the pro-Soviet tilt in the policy of Non-alignment, it could not carry out any major modification in the Indian foreign policy. Likewise, it was promised that Non-aligned policy will be replaced with 'genuine' Non-alignment, nobody ever described the term 'genuine'. Similarly, during the Soviet intrusion in Afghanistan in 1979, Charan Singh government failed to take any decisive stand on the matter as the stability of his government itself was in doubt. So, probably by default, conduct of Indian foreign policy during the Janata years continued on the same lines outlined during the government of Indira Gandhi. Naturally, after returning back to power in 1980, Indira Gandhi's foreign policy did not experience any break from her previous tenure.

Indian foreign policy was up for certain cosmetic changes with the arrival of Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister after the assassination of his mother in 1984. As a matter of fact, Rajiv Gandhi seemed to have had a penchant for resolving long standing ethnic conflicts both within the country and its immediate neighborhood. Thus, while internally, his tenure has been noted for peace agreements such as Assam Accord, Mizo Accord and the 1985 Rajiv-Longowal accord to restore peace in Punjab etc.; on the external front, his most adventurous move that eventually cost his life, was the Sri Lankan Peace Accord. Such an overtly interventionist twist in the Indian foreign policy had been introduced for the first time in the history of India's external relations. In accordance with the provisions of the Peace Accord, India sent its military contingents to Sri Lanka in the name of Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) to maintain peace in the northern part of that country. This was taken as an assault by India on the liberation movement of Tamils in Sri Lanka, the sole responsibility of which was attributed to Rajiv Gandhi. While IPKF did not fully succeed in achieving the objectives for which it was sent to Sri Lanka, its operations in that country cost lives of a large number of Indian soldiers. Thus, developments in the realm of Indian foreign policy during the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi were quite distressing and harmful to the national interests.

1.5 INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY DURING 1990S

1990s have been a decade of momentous transformations in the international scenario having significant implications for the evolution for Indian foreign policy. It began with the disintegration of

Soviet Union and transformation of international political scenario from bipolar to unipolar. The disintegration of Soviet Union did not provide sufficient time for its close friendly nations to resettle their geopolitical orientations in order to adjust to the novel realities of a unipolar world. India had, indeed, been one of those countries that were taken off guard in the wake of Soviet disintegration. In such a scenario, two cardinal bases of Indian foreign policy – policy of Non-alignment, and Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Friendship – stood the chance of being questioned as irrelevant. Above all, India would have to realign the focus of its foreign policy to meet the challenges of rapid transformations in international arena.

Indo-Soviet treaty had provided a security shield to India. With Soviet Union gone, the government of P V Narasimha Rao came under heavy US pressure to dismantle its nuclear and missile programmes. Thus, during the tenure of Narasimha Rao, Indian foreign policy remained under continued pressure of the US to which it buckled down more often than not.

Amidst these uncertain and fluid circumstances, India faced a severe domestic economic crisis. Simply, India did not have enough foreign exchange to pay for its imports. Rao government launched liberalization of the Indian economy; it was a great shift away from the state-centric strategy of economic development that India had followed since independence. The process of globalization had become universal; countries were liberalizing their economies and allowing greater play to market forces through the process privatization. For India, there was no other way but to move the economy by following liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG).

In the area of foreign economic policy, Rao government took a major step by announcing the 'Look East' policy. In the age of economic globalization, a liberalizing Indian economy needed to integrate closely with the dynamic economies of South East Asia and East Asia. He opened diplomatic relations with Israel. Importantly, it was under Rao that India began to formulate policy to fight cross-border terrorism and raised it as a security threat in international forums.

An economically weak government faced external pressure. The US, not being the sole super power, resorted to arms-twisting and put pressure on India to open its economy to American exports and business firms. India also came under pressure to roll-back its nuclear programme. India joined the US in co-sponsoring the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and Fissile Material Control Treaty (FMCT). Rao tenure is important as the doors opened, for the first time, for defence cooperation between India and the US.

The second half of the decade of 1990s was the period of coalition governments in India. The general election held in May 1996 produced unstable coalition governments under three prime ministers. Usually, such governments are not in a position to bring about any radical transformation in the foreign policy of the country given the lack of formidable majority with them to defy the existing

consensus on the broader contours of national interests. So, this phase might be argued to be a phase of remarkable continuity in the foreign policy of India. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee formed a government in May 1996 which lasted only 13 days. United front governments headed by Prime Ministers Deve Gowda (June 1996- April 97) and I. K. Gujral (April 1997- March 98) lasted less than two years. Arguably, they lacked insight or natural acumen to bring about any creative transformation in the foreign policy of the country. Foreign policy moved on the routine outlines demarcated in the past keeping in view the national interests of the country.

However, Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral had vast experience and sharp acumen in understanding international affairs and foreign policy nuances. As Prime Minister, he introduced a novel idea in the realm of Indian foreign policy which is euphemistically called 'Gujral Doctrine.' The core of the 'Gujral Doctrine' was extension of benefits to neighbours, excluding Pakistan, on non-reciprocal basis. The doctrine had five principles: (i) To neighbours, like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka, India would not ask for reciprocity but would give all it can in good faith. (ii) No South Asian country would allow its territory to be used against interest of another country of the region. (iii) No country would interfere in the internal affairs of the other country. (iv) All would respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. (v) All disputes would be resolved through peaceful bilateral negotiations.

1.6 INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER NDA – I

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, headed by the veteran parliamentarian Atal Behari Vajpayee came to power in 1998. In a short span of time, Vajpayee led three NDA governments. He had first become the Prime Minister on 16 May 1996 only to resign 13 days later after he lost the majority on the floor of Lok Sabha. Vajpayee became Prime Minister for second time in 1998 but just 13 months later in 1999 he lost the no confidence motion by just one vote. After the fresh elections were held in 1999, Vajpayee took the oath as Prime Minister of India for the third time on 13 October 1999 and remained Prime Minister until the general elections held in May 2004. Thus, NDA ruled with Vajpayee as PM three times in 1996, 1998-99 and 1999-2004. The second phase of the NDA rule began in 2014 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the helms and continues after its victory in the general election held in 2019.

In view of the fact that the ideological and philosophical foundations of the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) have been laid on the alternative vision of India as compared to Congress, it is natural that the BJP-led NDA governments' perspectives on various internal as well as external policies would differ from that of the Congress. Yet, it also needs to be kept in mind that foreign policy of a country is, ordinarily, a product of consensus amongst different stakeholders of the country in such a way that

change of government need not effect substantive change in the foreign policy. Nonetheless, the change of guard in the form of the NDA government headed by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee brought in some very significant changes in India's strategic outlook and its practice. Leaving aside the short spell of 13 days, the two distinct terms of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee would be known for bringing about significant transformations in the foreign policy of India keeping in view the ideological predilections of the party. From the day one, Vajpayee government was in favour of a close cooperation with the United States, apart from maintaining good ties with the Russian Federation. Similarly, the government also tried to pursue a policy of good neighbourly relations with the countries of South Asia, in particular with Pakistan. Finally, Vajpayee's period would always be known for India conducting nuclear explosion at Pokhran in May 1998.

Atal Behari Vajpayee became the PM second time in 1998 leading a coalition government consisting of 13 political parties. But the government could not last beyond 13 months. In the election held in October 1999, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance was elected again to power with absolute majority.

Nuclear Test: During the first Vajpayee rule for 13 months, NDA gave a push to two initiatives – go nuclear and build closer relations with Pakistan. The BJP has been a great exponent of India going for nuclear weapons. On 11 May 1998, India conducted three nuclear tests at Pokhran in Rajasthan. With Pokhran – II, India declared itself a nuclear weapon state. Soon followed India's 'nuclear doctrine' which had three important principles: voluntary moratorium on further tests; 'no first use'; and 'minimum credible' deterrence.

Analysts have reported that India had first tried to test nuclear weapons in 1982 under Mrs. Indira Gandhi; later Narasimha Rao tried to test nuclear weapons in 1995 but on each occasions, American intelligence found out and put pressure to stop the testing. It goes to the credit of the first NDA government that India did successfully experiment nuclear devices and declared itself a nuclear weapons state; and thereafter has sought to join the nuclear power club as a responsible nuclear state. There was a strong international reaction against nuclear tests but credit to Indian political leadership and the diplomacy that it was able to successfully withstand these criticisms and sanctions which came in the wake of the tests.

Indo-US Relations: There were many developments during the tenure of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. After the Pokhran II, India engaged US in a dialogue for improved relations with that country. There was a better understanding on the part of US leadership towards India's growing strategic importance. US President Bill Clinton came to India in March 2000. India was able to convey to the US and other powers its complex strategic scenario which had prompted it to go nuclear. US also showed better appreciation of India's security situation especially in the context of

cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. Besides, a liberalizing Indian economy offered tremendous opportunities to American firms for trade and investment. US also better understood the rising strategic importance of India in the context of the rise of China. India could anchor US in Asia and help in the 'peaceful rise' of China.

Relations with US gained a new strategic dimension after the terrorist attacks in US on 11 September 2001 (9/11). US became aware of the danger of international terrorism emanating from Pakistan-Afghanistan border region. India assured its support to US in the fight against international terrorism. Then came the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001 which further highlighted before the world the threat of cross border terrorism and use of terrorism as a tool by Pakistan against India. Bush administration began considering India a strategic partner for the peace and security in Asia and the wider Indian Ocean region. The large-sized India with its growing economic and military capabilities could anchor US in Asia and the Indian Ocean region as a partner for regional peace and stability. Under Bush, US began a strategic dialogue with India. There were three core issues in the dialogue: civilian nuclear technology; space shield; and trade in dual use technology. Bush administration also lifted several of the sanctions that had been imposed in the wake of the Pokhran – II though other restrictions remained in force. In February 2003, India and US signed a framework agreement to boost trade in high technology area. The dialogue also included aspects of nuclear safeguards and other technology-related safety issues. Then came the civil nuclear energy agreement in 2005 under the next UPA government headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

India-Pakistan Relations: Prime Minister Vajpayee said, 'you can change friends, not neighbours'. Realizing this geographic fatalism, he took unprecedented initiative to improve relations with Pakistan. He went on a bus trip to Lahore to meet his Pakistani counterpart, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. After the meeting in Lahore, the Pakistani PM said that it would be the year of decision on the vexed issue of Kashmir. But then came the set-back. In May 1999, Kargil war broke out when Pakistani troops were found occupying heights in Kargil region. Kargil was the first military confrontation between two nuclear-armed countries. There was change of guard in Pakistan. Pakistan Army Chief, General Pervez Musharraf overthrew the elected government of Nawaz Sharif in October 1999. Prime Minister Vajpayee made another attempt at normalization of relations when he invited Pervez Musharraf to Agra in early 2001. The effort did not bear fruits as Pakistan continued to insist on first resolving the 'core' issue of Jammu & Kashmir. On 13 December 2001, came the attack on the Indian parliament. Thereafter, relations deteriorated for a long period. Meanwhile, India became closer to US and sought a strategic partnership.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Evaluate India's foreign policy under NDA – I

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1.7 INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY DURING UPA

For ten years (2004-2014), Congress led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was the custodian of Indian foreign policy. Given the fact that foundational contours of Indian foreign policy have been ordained by Congress governments at different periods of time, there would have been lesser chance of any radical break from the conventional mores of the external affairs of the country. Interestingly, sentimental attachment to a number of foreign policy relics from the past had gone to make the government reiterate its commitment for those features despite their perceived redundancy in the change milieu of international politics. A prominent example of such relic of the past might be said to be the policy of Non-alignment. Thus, it would have been beyond imagination to expect any marked departure from the established norms of Indian foreign policy during the reign of the UPA. However, the long period of UPA rule cannot be said to be uneventful as far as Indian foreign policy was concerned. So, what the UPA government did was to introduce newer elements in the traditional framework of Indian foreign policy to make that in sync with the changing dynamics of global politics. While majority of the creative interventions of the UPA government are novel in nature, a few of them really exhibited certain signs of break from the past in order to make the foreign policy meet the objectives of national interests effectively. Let us examine some of these marked continuities from the past and new departures made in the Indian foreign policy.

One of the major reorientations brought about by the UPA government in the foreign policy of India was the shift of focus from geostrategic to economic goals. In a globalizing world, economic

relations had gained the top priority in foreign policies of all countries, UPA government was no exception; it also sought to use foreign policy as a tool of augmenting India's economic interests in different parts of the world. High rate of economic growth on sustained basis was the bedrock of India's claim as an emerging power. Two remarkable examples bearing testimony to such reorientations might be seen in the policy measures such as the 'Look East' policy and membership of powerhouses like BRICS. While the 'Look East' policy aimed at leveraging India as one of the partners in the spectacular growth stories of the East Asian economic tigers, forums such as BRICS tried to mount a collective effort on the part of non-Western countries to reform the architecture of global governance.

Apart from the economic considerations, Indian foreign policy during the UPA regime made outstanding forays in the arena of restrictive technology regimes to get the country access to these regimes.

Indian foreign policy has become deeply institutionalized since the 1990s. A number of mechanisms and departments do facilitate formulation of policy on long term basis. In a world which is fluid and uncertain, ad hoc approaches or personal choices cannot decide foreign policy decisions. The exigencies of international affairs and unforeseen developments expect foreign policy establishment to remain agile. A large and emerging power needs an agile statecraft to respond to international developments and secure its national interests. Foreign policy under UPA showed a continuity from the previous NDA governments in terms of India's relations with the neighbours and the big powers including the US and Russia. There were several significant foreign policy developments during the ten years of UPA rule.

India-Pakistan Relations: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met the Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in September 2004 in New York. The two leaders reiterated their commitment to peaceful solutions to all the problems including Kashmir. India's Prime Minister said that in a globalised world, borders should become irrelevant. Several confidence building measures (CBMs) were agreed upon to ease the tension on the border. It led to troop reduction in Kashmir in 2004. Important CBMs in nuclear sector were also agreed upon. The two sides also agreed to discuss their differences over the boundary in the Sir Creek area, where they have a maritime boundary dispute, and the Wular Barrage and Tulbul navigation project. On the negotiation table were also issues such as the demilitarization of Siachen and the Baglihar dam. Among others, the two countries also agreed to bus service between Sri Nagar and Muzaffarabad. Besides, there was the Samjhauta Express train service from Wagah to Attari and later the Thar Express between Rajasthan and Sindh. In 2005, yet another bus service was launched from Amritsar to Nankana Saheb,

A notable feature during this period was popular support on both sides for normalization of relations and resolutions of bilateral differences and disputes. The strong public opinion however could not reduce the trust deficit between the two countries. A number of terrorist incidents put a spanner in the peace process. The summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Havana in 2006 gave another opportunity for the two leaders to have a summit meeting where they agreed to push the process of dialogue and peace forward.

India-China Relations: UPA government maintained the momentum from the previous government, even gave a push, to the bilateral ties with China. In 2005, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited India. The joint statement issued stressed on strengthening economic and trade relations in particular. Wen Jiabao's visit was followed by the visit of President Hu Jintao. India's Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee went to China in 2006 where the two countries agreed to improve military cooperation as part of the bilateral CBM process. In 2006, the two sides also agreed to open the trade route at Nathu La pass in Sikkim. Trade was becoming the engine carrying forward the bilateral relations; and in the next few years, China emerged as India's No. 1 trade partner. It remains so in 2019 also. Energy security appeared to be another area of mutual cooperation and for a while in 2005-06, India had its 'oil diplomacy' when the view was that India and China, being leading energy consumers, could jointly seek access to global oil and gas resources.

India-Russia Relations: Leaders of India, China and Russia had an important meeting on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in St. Petersburg in 2008. The process meant gradual convergence of viewpoints on significant global issues such as the need to change international financial architecture and bring other changes in the US and other multilateral institutions so as to reflect the changed power equations in the first decade of the twenty-first century. This strategic convergence led few years later to the formation of the BRIC grouping comprising Brazil, Russia, India and China – the four emerging powers and fast-growing economies – later joined by South Africa making it BRICS.

India-US Relations: India-US relations gathered steam under UPA government. Suffice to say here, the ten year rule of the UPA would always be remembered for the fundamental changes and developments that took place in the Indo-US relation. Significant level of cooperation had already been established between the armed forces of the two countries during the NDA rule. The two sides continued to build during the second phase of the Next Step in Strategic Partnership (NSSP). Under the NSSP, the two countries had concurred that implementation of the NSSP would result in considerable economic benefit for both of them and would also lead to improvement in regional and global economic security. Under the NSSP, the two countries had agreed in January 2004 to expand cooperation in areas of civil nuclear energy; space research; and trade in high technology areas.

A path-breaking initiative in this regard happens to be the India-US Civil Nuclear Deal of 2005 that

was to allow India to join the elite group of countries having open access to cutting edge technologies and supplies in the field of nuclear technology. Implicitly, the deal amounted to US recognizing India as a nuclear weapons state. Indo-US relations became thick though cooperation in the area of civilian nuclear energy remains unrealized. India has not bought as yet even one nuclear reactor under the deal. Thus, Indian foreign policy underwent subtle but significant transformations during the ten years of UPA rule that made it come out of the shadow of Cold War. As a result of the UPA initiatives, foreign policy turned out to be a major instrument of economic cooperation, without losing its primary focus of serving the geostrategic interests of the country.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discuss the important landmarks in the evolution of India’s foreign policy under UPA regime.

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1.8 INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER NDA – II

Indian foreign policy seems to have scaled newer heights during the period of the current government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After Nehru, probably Modi would have been the only Prime Minister of India who has shown so much of interest and readiness to pursue a vigorous foreign policy. Not only has he used his foreign policy structures including his foreign minister to help execute his vision of an active role of India in the wider international community, he has taken upon himself the responsibility of visiting as many countries of the world as possible in pursuance of his policy of active engagement with all the countries. Probably no other Prime Minister would have visited as many countries on official assignments as visited by Modi.

During Modi’s tenure, reputation of India in the international community has surely increased manifold. India’s relations with many of the countries such as Japan have marched from routine to

strategic one. India's foreign policy has indeed been able to cut much ice with her neighbours such as China whose top leaders have preferred to visit India frequently. Modi has been successful to harness hitherto untapped supporters for India such as the grand Indian diasporas in so many countries. He has proved his mettle in using soft power to the greatest advantage of India to seek and obtain support of large number of countries in the world.

1.9 LET US SUM UP

Evolution of India's foreign policy has really been a story of reinvention of India's interactions with the rest of the world. Operating within the confines of the domestic and international determinants, Indian foreign policy has been able to help country tide over all sorts of difficulties and challenges facing it as an independent nation. Right from the gripping circumstances of cold war to the contemporary scenario of multi polar world, Indian foreign policy has helped the country serve its national interests to the extent possible. Barring the solitary failure of India's foreign policy in averting the defeat of the country in its war with China, dynamism of India's foreign policy has always secured a respectful place for the country amidst tightest of the situations in the international politics. It must be acknowledged as the contribution of India's foreign policy that the country is now reckoned as one of the major powers in the world whose voices need to be heard on all the major issues of global concern.

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1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Your answer should include the colonial tendency to involve India on foreign soil, creation of department of foreign affairs by Congress, Nehru's penchant for Afro-Asian solidarity, values that emerged out of the freedom movement and articulation of viewpoints on global issues by the Indian National Congress. Your answer should be based on Section 1.2.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Highlight the idealism of Nehru, principles that underlined his foreign policy, marginal space for country's national defence. Also, identify the key principles of and the debate around the 'Nehruvian Consensus'. Your answer should be based on Section 1.3.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Point out the reorientation in geostrategic outlook of the government of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, and major breakthrough in Indian foreign policy under his rule. Your answer should be based on Section 1.6.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

- 1) Discuss the orientation, goals and achievement in the foreign policy realm under the ten years of UPA government. You need to highlight aspects of relations with Pakistan, China, Russia and the US. Your answer should be based on Section 1.7.

UNIT – 2 DETERMINANTS OF INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Nature and Type of Determinants
- 2.3 Major Determinants
 - 2.3.1 Geographical Factors
 - 2.3.2 Economic Factors
 - 2.3.3 Historical and Cultural Factors
 - 2.3.4 Domestic Milieu
 - 2.3.5 Persona of the Leadership
 - 2.3.6 Ideological Predilections
 - 2.3.7 International Scenario
 - 2.3.8 Minor Determinants
- 2.4 Complexity of Working of Determinants
- 2.5 Let Us Sum UP
- 2.6 Some Useful References
- 2.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, students would be able to know about the factors that go into shaping of the foreign policy of India. In general, foreign policy is product of a complex set of factors. After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the nature and types of determinants of India’s foreign policy;
- Analyse and evaluate their place and weight in the making of India’s foreign policy;
- Explain the minor determinants of India’s foreign policy; and
- Analyze the complexities in the working of these determinants.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

India’s foreign policy is shaped by a number of factors. Acting in tandem with each other, these

factors determine the broad contours of a country's dealings with the rest of the world. These factors are, in fact, the harsh realities of physical and human endowments within which a country finds itself encircled. Such factors, thus, define the limits and opportunities for the foreign policy a country intends to pursue. They also determine the autonomy or dependence of a country on the rest of the world. There exists very little scope for the movers and shapers of a foreign policy to maneuver the external relations of the country. It is these determinants that ordain prime role for certain countries, compared to others, in the international relations. Conversely, many of the countries in the world remain a passive recipient of the moves and countermoves of more active players in the international relations. Such a behavior of different countries can very well be appreciated by looking at the determinants of their foreign policies.

2.2 NATURE AND TYPE OF DETERMINANTS

Conceptually, determinants of foreign policy are a set of distinct factors ranging from the geophysical location of a country to the personality of its top leadership that go into setting the trajectory and course of a country's external relations. While many of these determinants are in the nature of permanent fixtures, many of them have the potential of undergoing subtle transformations with the changing times and circumstances. For instance, geography, history, culture, traditions are more or less permanent markers of a country's existence. On the contrary, nature and degree of economic development, personality of top leadership, domestic milieu as well as ideological orientations of a given government are the determinants that are found to be changing with change of time. At the same time, many of the determinants of a country's foreign policy are in the nature of given variables that cannot be changed at the wish of the country while there are quite a few of such factors that can be adjusted to a specific requirement with fine vision and assiduous efforts. The above is best exemplified by the axiom: 'a country can choose friends, but not the neighbours'. No country can change its neighbors, its history, its cultural moorings but it can surely change the course and degree of its economic development, its ideological predilection, domestic milieu, personality of its leadership, among others. Finally, there can also be seen the potency or impotency of maneuvering the determinants of foreign policy of a country in the long run to give a radically altered view of its external affairs as compared to the past. To illustrate, there are a number of countries in the world such as India and China which used to be on the margins in the international relations just a few decades back. But by dint of their spectacular economic growth accompanied with maneuvering of other determinants of their foreign policy, they have arrived on the centre stage of international politics in contemporary times, where they are described variously as 'emerging' powers, 'rising' powers and 'leading' powers.

Scholars have tried to classify the determinants of foreign policy into certain distinct categories. For example, some analysts categorize the determinants of foreign policy into internal and external factors. Conceptually, internal factors are those factors whose roots can be located within the boundaries of a country. Amongst such factors, they include geography, history, tradition, culture, economic development, nature of leadership, domestic milieu etc. External factors, for them, are international milieu, activities of the neighboring countries, multilateral dynamics of international politics, among others. However, such a classification does not seem to be logical and convincing given the fact that what are described as external factors are also intimately related to the domestic policies of country. External factors of a foreign policy are in fact a part product of the measures initiated as part of the internal policies of a country. Hence, in place of such a classification, a more scientific classification of determinants of a country's foreign policy would be their enumeration on the basis of their vitality in shaping the external policy. Accordingly, J. Bandhyopadhyaya, a veteran researcher on India's foreign policy, has sought to classify the determinants of Indian foreign policy into seven major and certain minor categories. For him, major determinants of Indian foreign policy could be: geography, economic development, political traditions, domestic milieu, international milieu, military strength, and national character. Amongst the minor factors, he includes, role of political institutions, public opinion, party system, pressure groups, institutions of external affairs, and personality of individuals involved in shaping the foreign policy. What follows next is, therefore, an analytical discussion on major determinants of India's foreign policy.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discuss the nature and types of determinants of India's foreign policy.

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2.3 MAJOR DETERMINANTS OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

The important determinants that have played a critical role in shaping the Indian foreign policy over the years include geography, economy, history, culture, domestic milieu, personality of a leader, ideology and external environment.

2.3.1 Geographical Factors

Geographical factors refer to the shape, size, geophysical peculiarities, resource endowments and surrounding geopolitical environment of a country. That way, India is a fairly big country having seventh largest landmass in the world in the southern-most part of Asia. Having almost all sorts of geographical formations, weather, climate, water bodies and flora and fauna, she gets a lot of leverage by nature to play a crucial role in the international affairs. Natural boundaries on many sides of the country provide it veritable defense from inimical forces. Strategic location of India is further strengthened by the long coastline that surrounds the country from east, west and south. They make her pivot of global politics and trade in the Indian Ocean region, though the same oceanic access also became the cause of India's colonization by European powers. Thus, geographical factors place India in an unenviable position to carve out an eminent role for herself in the international relations.

Another important implication of the geographical factor relates to the neighbouring countries that have been ordained for her on account of her physical location. Quite obviously, neighbouring ambience of a country plays a very significant role in affording her a comprehensive part in the wider international relations. That way, though India is endowed by nature to play a vital role in southern, western and south-eastern parts of Asia, in practice such a role has been circumscribed by not so friendly ambience in her neighborhood. Apart from having fought wars with its two prominent neighbours, viz. China and Pakistan, India also has a 'love-hate relation' with many, if not all, of her neighbours. Hence, major preoccupation of Indian foreign policy at probably all the times has been maintaining friendly relations with all her neighbours so that it is permitted some leg space to make its presence felt in the international relations far and wide.

2.3.2 Economic Factors

Economic factors include endowment of a country with natural resources such as metal, minerals, fossil fuels, fertile land, water, human resources and use of all these endowments to achieve and maintain a high rate of economic growth for the country. Though economic factors have always been the foundational determinant of a country's foreign policy, the significance of these factors have attained critical proportions in the wake of privatization, liberalization and globalization in different parts of the world. Resource exploitation has reached unprecedented rates in the wake of economic globalization. Besides, India has a favourable demographic profile. In this context, India happens to be one of the fortunate countries to be blessed with vast variety of natural and human resources. Barring a few massive imports such as fossil fuels, uranium and precious metal such as gold, India

does have sufficient, if not abundant, endowments of almost all the major natural resources that go to lay the foundation of a vibrant and happening economy in the world.

After independence, India adopted the 'mixed' economy model of development where state regulated private business with license and permits. State control and regulation had a stifling effect on private sector. As a result, for a long period of time, economic growth rate was low; and invariably lower than the annual rate of population growth. Ironically Indian policy makers seemed to be content with this low growth in the overall socialistic milieu of the time. In 1978, the noted economist Raj Krishna described this national contentment with low growth rate in the 1950s-80s decades as 'Hindu rate of growth'. Initially, due to her inadequacy in food production, its foreign policy dynamics was marred by wheat diplomacy of Western countries. For a long time, India remained predominantly an exporter of raw materials than finished goods which compromised her ability to leverage meaningful relations with the developing countries. However, things have changed remarkably during the last three decades. Vibrant economic growth of the country has enabled it to bargain hard in international parleys with the Western world. She has also been using aid diplomacy to win support of many Afro-Asian countries for her cause on international forums. Indian technocrats and wider diasporas, a product of Indian economic growth story, are also playing crucial role in securing a place of pride for India in the realm of global politics.

2.3.3 Historical and Cultural Factors

History and culture set the background in which the foreign policy of a country gets shaped. India is one of the few countries in the world with ancient civilization, and rich historical and cultural legacy. At the same time, around two hundred years of colonial rule, and a long and chequered history of national movement also provide valuable inputs to the shaping of Indian foreign policy. In the year 1700, India accounted for an estimated 24.4 per cent of global GDP; two hundred fifty years of colonial exploitation had reduced its share to 4.2 per cent of global GDP in 1950. After getting independence from British colonialism, India continues to have very close relations with its former colonizer. Similarly, the values emanating during the national movement stand cherished even today and continue to become the guiding principles of Indian foreign policy. Anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-apartheid, solidarity with the cause of Afro-Asian nations, support for United Nations endeavors etc. are some of the running themes of national movement that remain ingrained in the foreign policy of the country even today.

Cultural legacies of India are inherited not only from recent history but also from hoary past. Their vitality in sustaining and fostering the causes of humanity make them inerasable features of Indian foreign policy. Cultural diplomacy of Ashok 'the Great' continues to be a major tool of Indian foreign policy. In consonance with the ideal of *vasudhaiv kutumbkam*, India has indeed been

pursuing her foreign policy taking the whole world as a family well before the wave of globalization brought about closer interactions amongst different parts of the world. Swami Vivekananda's exhortation of taking all the people as our brothers and sisters still resonate in the conduct of Indian foreign policy. Gandhian paradigms of *satyagraha*, *ahimsa* and *swadeshi* are taken as cardinal principles of Indian foreign policy since its very inception. In short, thus, history, culture and traditions have left very profound impact on determining the contours of Indian foreign policy.

2.3.4 Domestic Milieu

Theoretically, domestic milieu stands for the general circumstances and peculiar settings within a country that leave their imprint on the shaping of a country's foreign policy. India's mammoth social and cultural diversity is one of its unique selling points in international politics. For instance, having the second largest population of Muslims in the world has made it mandatory for Indian foreign policy to maintain cordial relations with the Arab and other countries having substantial Muslim population, including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Maldives. Conversely, the Islamic dimension has enabled India to develop a fairly indepth understanding of the so-called 'Muslim world'. Politics of Tamil Nadu always remain a determining factor in India's relations with Sri Lanka. Bengali bhadralok of West Bengal acts as the bedrock of India's relations with Bangladesh. Situation in Kashmir becomes the single most crucial issue determining the relations between India and Pakistan. Nepal and Bhutan surely carry distinct place in the cultural landscape of Indian populace in ways more than one.

Apart from the specific ways in which the social, cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic aspects of India determine her foreign policy, there are also a number of episodic or contextual dimensions of domestic milieu that go to cast their impact on shaping of the country's external affairs. On the issues where there exists consensus in the country, it becomes quite easy for the government to pursue a definite line of argument without any scope for backing out of that policy. But the issues over which discordant voices are also raised vis-à-vis government's policy, it becomes difficult to pursue that policy with great degree of conviction and resoluteness. For instance, a major cause of India's discomfiture in its misadventure in Sri Lanka in 1987 was the opposition of that move by the people of Tamil Nadu. In short, thus, domestic milieu has been acting as an important, though passive, determinant of India's foreign policy ever since its inception.

2.3.5 Persona of the Leadership

Persona of the leadership also arguably plays a very important role in formulation of a decisive foreign policy of a country. Globally, on a number of occasions, decisive pushes to foreign policies of different countries have been provided by strong leaders. For instance, victory of the allied powers, especially Britain in the Second World War, has squarely been attributed to the resolute

leadership provide by Prime Minister Winston Churchill. On the contrary, weak personalities become the cause of disastrous moments in a country's foreign policy. For example, during V. P. Singh's tenure as Prime Minister, India's war against terrorism was comprehensively weakened by the release of a number of hardened Kashmiri terrorists in exchange for the meek release of daughter of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. Likewise, many momentous incidents in the realm of international relations bear witness to the nature of leadership at a given point of time.

Imprints of the persona of leadership on the conduct of foreign policy of India are galore. Jawaharlal Nehru's idealistic vision and utopian perspective of India's relations with her neighbours not only cost her dearly in terms of loss in India-China war but also produced a number of perennial problems such as Kashmir. On the contrary, Indira Gandhi's resolute leadership not only won India her war with mischievous Pakistan but also earned all weather friends like Soviet Union and made India a nuclear country to be feared by its inimical forces. In nutshell, whenever irresolute or indecisive leadership came on the helms of Indian foreign policy, not only it compromised with the general conduct of the policy but also got inflicted severe dent in the unity and integrity of the nation. Conversely, strong and assertive leaders have always India make a mark in the conduct of its foreign policy both in immediate neighborhood as well as wider international relations.

2.3.6 Ideological Predilections

Ideological predilection means the implicit or explicit commitment of a leader to a particular ideology. Acting as two poles of ideological spectrum of international relations, capitalism and socialism have remained the sole mover of international relations for almost half a century in the form of Cold War. Subsequently, such ideological commitments were also sought from the leaders of the developing countries with fear or favour. At the same time, many leaders got their ideological orientation by their genuine belief in a particular ideology. Irrespective of the method of a leader's initiation into a particular ideology, such ideological commitments surely leave definite impact on the formulation of foreign policy of a country. Formulation and conduct of Indian foreign policy since independence has most, if not all, of the times impact of a particular ideology whose obvious repercussions have been seen on India's relations with different countries at different points of time.

Given Nehru's overt inclination towards socialist ideology, it was obvious that Indian foreign policy during his stewardship would be imbued with socialist underpinnings. Though the dynamics of Cold War did not allow India to join the Soviet bloc, Nehru personal chemistry and India's overall interactions with individual nations bore ample evidence of influence of socialism in the conduct of India's foreign policy. The socialist orientation of Indian foreign policy became most obvious during the reign of Indira Gandhi when she signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with Soviet Union setting aside India's long standing commitment to the doctrine of Non-alignment. In recent times,

given the ideological orientation of leadership towards free market capitalism, a marked tilt in the Indian foreign policy towards the United States and other capitalist countries are quite apparent. Thus, ideological predilections of political leadership have always been one of the determining factors of Indian foreign policy.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discuss the major determinants of India’s foreign policy.

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2.3.7 International Scenario

Apart from the internal dynamics of a country, external or international scenario plays equally, if not more, important a role in determining the nature and thrust of foreign policy of a country. To put it differently, while domestic factors help in formulation of a proactive foreign policy, international scenario presents a situation in which a country has to react to a given situation which eventually becomes the course of its foreign policy. As a matter of fact, much of the conduct of a country’s foreign policy is determined by international scenario as much as it is determined by domestic factors. The impact of international factors is so profound on foreign policies that it would not be wrong to argue that quite often what a country proposes on the domestic front of its external relations gets disposed by international scenario. Only a few countries in the world, like the superpowers or economic and military giants such as the United States, Russia, China, and France, among others, get some leeway to have a foreign policy that influences the march of international relations rather than getting influenced by that.

Determining role of international scenario on Indian foreign policy has been quite apparent from day one. As pointed out earlier, Nehru would surely have gone for a closer relations with Soviet Union given his apparent love for socialist pattern of life, but the dynamics of Cold War decisively forced him to go for the policy of Non-alignment, and equal distance from both the superpowers. Similarly,

given its penchant for peace and non-violence, India would have never gone for wars with Pakistan and China to settle its issues with them. But it was forced by its belligerent neighbours to fight wars with them at different points of time. In the same vein, had China not exploded its nuclear bomb in 1964, it would have been beyond imagination of Indian foreign and security establishments to reorient peaceful nuclear programme of the country towards explosion of nuclear devices. Even in contemporary times, much, if not all, of the foreign policy maneuvers of the present government are aimed at countering the strategic moves of China and Pakistan in as much as they are aimed at serving the sovereign national interests of the country.

2.3.8 Minor Determinants

In addition to the major determinants, a number of minor factors also need to be recognized as veritable influences in the making of a country's foreign policy. To begin with, political and statutory institutions play quite important role in finalization, if not initiation, of foreign policy moves at different levels and in different times. Rejection of American entry into League of Nations by Senate is the classic case in that country. Pakistani army's role in determining that country's policy towards India is not a hidden fact. In India also, quite a few political institutions such as Parliament play significant role in strengthening foreign policy measures as has been done in the case of India-US Civil Nuclear Deal. At the same time, role of public opinion in making or unmaking of a foreign policy initiative also needs to be appreciated. The impact of public opinions attains greater significance in democratic countries where government has to be responsive to the public sentiments in running the affairs of the country. If a government shows arrogance in deciding in favour of a policy defying the public opinion, severe reprisals from the masses is also accompanied by probable failure of such a policy. This has been amply seen in the case of Indian intervention in the affairs of Sri Lanka.

Dynamics of party system in India also impacts its foreign policy to a large extent. In the days of dominance of Communist Party of India (Marxist) on the political scene of the country, Indian foreign policy was never permitted to go overtly against China. Pressure of the political parties from Tamil Nadu always influenced government's policy towards Sri Lanka in a big way. Similar tactics have also been applied by pressure groups to get a particular line of action taken by government on a particular issue in international relations. For instance, the farm lobby in India played a major role in giving shape to India's response to the World Trade Organization (WTO) proposals on agriculture and allied activities. In contemporary times, role of certain think tanks in the making of country's foreign policy has overtly been acknowledged by government. A case in point has been the New Delhi based Observer Research Foundation (ORF) which has been associated with the organization of the prestigious Raisina Hills Dialogue along with the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi

for the past few years. In brief, thus, there are a host of minor factors that may not be in forefront of foreign policy making but their imprints on the nature and contours a particular aspect of foreign policy of India is more than obvious.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discuss the minor determinants of India’s foreign policy.

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2.4 COMPLEXITY IN THE WORKING OF DETERMINANTS

Enumeration of the major determinants of Indian foreign policy might tend to give the impression that they work in tandem – to simultaneously give a particular shape to the external moves of the country. However, such an understanding is only partly true as not all of the above mentioned factors work together to pull off a specific policy decision from the government. It needs to be reiterated that much of the determinants of foreign policy do not act on the decision making process in a direct way.

Rather, they tend to provide the general framework within which the decision making process has to operate and final decisions are taken. Though foreign policy per se is a collective noun standing for the sum totals of actions or non-actions of the government vis-à-vis its dealing with the rest of the world, in reality, it consists of a number of sub-components of decisions which have been taken at different points of time in response to different domestic or international unfolding of events or processes. So, different determinants of India’s foreign policy come to play their part on different occasions with other factors remaining dormant for the time being. For instance, India’s decision towards adoption of the policy of non-alignment during the beginning of its foreign policy was predominantly determined by the international scenario of cold war than any other determinant.

Interestingly, determinants of India’s foreign policy work in any of the three ways. At most of the times, these factors tend to act as positive inducements to provide affirmative persuasions for

adoption of a particular course of action in the conduct of external affairs of the country. For example, almost all the determinants of India's foreign policy presumably worked together to influence the decision makers to take the Kashmir issue to the United Nations Security Council for its consideration rather than opting for an all out action to settle the Kashmir issue for once and all. Secondly, on certain occasions, some or all of the determinants work for resisting a particular decision to be taken, and on occasions succeed in their pursuits. For example, during and quite some time after the end of Cold War, the imperatives of the policy Non-alignment necessitated that the country should either keep equal distance with both the super powers or become somewhat friendlier with the United States even without joining the military alliances sponsored by it. But the major determinants of Indian foreign policy acted probably in tandem with each other in such a way that instead of becoming friendlier or at least neutral to the geopolitics of South Asian region, the US almost turned hostile to India which further acted to push India into the lap of Soviet Union. Finally, some, if not all, of the determinants also operate with the objective of seeking to modify a particular foreign policy decision sooner or later. For instance, the imperatives of economic development of India have always sought to modify the Indian foreign policy in such a way that economic orientation rather than geopolitical and strategic orientation becomes the driving force behind dealings of the country with the rest of the world. Though such a vision has always been at the core of economic factors of Indian foreign policy, its fruition could be possible only after the 1990s when India opened its economy for others and also attuned its foreign policy towards achieving economic objectives in the long run.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Highlight the complexities in the working of determinants of India's foreign policy.

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2.5 LET US SUM UP

Determinants of India's foreign policy have set the framework within which the broad parameters of the country's external relations are to be premised. Undoubtedly, the nature of such determinants is such that they leave much leeway for the makers of India's foreign policy to make creative reinvention of these determinants to get over the limits set by them. There are, in fact, many countries in the world such as Japan and Singapore which have been greatly handicapped by the determinants of their foreign policy to go for a respectful role in the international relations. But out of sheer vision and dynamism of their leadership, these countries are treated with much grace and dignity in the comity of nations. On that count, India is really fortunate enough to be blessed with such endowments by nature which can help it become a great power in the world. But the onus of responsibility for turning the foreign policy determinants into drivers of growth in the prestige and status of the country lies on its leaders. It is really unfortunate that the idealist and parochial vision of some of its leaders led the country to its worst defeat in war with neighbor in 1962. However, that was a hard lesson to be learnt. The country has moved miles ahead of that sad story of its past and is perfectly on the way of attaining its respectful place in the comity of nations. In such a profound pursuit, the major determinants of the country's foreign policy must be attuned to facilitate rather than debilitate her onward march towards greater and meaningful involvement in the international affairs. Though rapid expansion in India's international image and reputation has also caused consternations in many countries, it remains to be seen how they react to the unfolding situations. Since India's forays in the international relations are not aimed at being inimical to the interests of any country, it is likely that enhanced involvement of the country in international affairs would be welcomed by the wider international community. In such a pursuit, therefore, the determinants of India's foreign policy need to provide solid support to the national leadership so that the national interests of the country are not compromised in any eventuality. Only then, India can be credited with turning the challenges posed by the determinants of its foreign policy into opportunities whose obvious results are there for all to see.

2.6 SOME USEFUL REFERENCES

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J. N. Dixit, *India's Foreign Policy and its Neighbours*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2010.

2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Your answer should include different aspect of nature of determinants and their types in terms of internal as well as external determinants.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) You need to focus on major determinants such as geography, economy, history and culture as well as domestic milieu of India as core determinants of its foreign policy.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Highlight the significance of minor determinants such statutory and political institutions, political parties, pressure groups, public opinion, among others in giving final shape to India's foreign policy.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

- 1) Bring out the complexity of the working of India's foreign policy by pointing out the different ways in which these determinants work to give shape to the foreign policy of India.

UNIT – 3 PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES OF INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY

Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Principles of India’s Foreign Policy

3.2.1 Policy of Non-Alignment

3.2.2 Panchsheel

3.2.3 Anti-Colonialism, Anti-Imperialism and Anti-Apartheid

3.2.4 Avoidance of Force for Settlement of International Disputes

3.2.5 Belief in Ideals Enshrined in UN Charter

3.2.6 Equitable and Egalitarian International Order

3.2.7 Faith in Ideal of World Peace

3.2.8 Bilateral Framework of Dispute Settlement

3.2.9 Disarmament

3.3 Objectives of India’s Foreign Policy

3.3.1 Protection and Promotion of National Interest

3.3.2 Autonomy in Decision-Making

3.3.3 Economic Drivers of Foreign Policy

3.3.4 Global Counter-Terrorism Framework

3.3.5 Equitable Environmental Protection Framework

3.3.6 Non-Discriminatory Technology Transfer Regimes

3.3.7 Diaspora and ‘Soft’ Power

3.4 Let Us Sum Up

3.5 Some Useful References

3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit seeks to introduce you to the principles and objectives of India’s foreign policy. After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the main principles and drivers of India’s foreign policy;
- Examine the meaning and relevance of Non-alignment as the principal framework of India’s foreign policy;

- Discuss the objectives of India's foreign policy; and
- Appreciate national interest as the core objective of India's foreign policy.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Theoretically, foreign policy of no country can be bereft of certain foundational principles and profound objectives. The principles and objectives, in fact, provide the structural and functional frameworks within which the foreign policy is to be framed and in accordance with whom it has to be conducted. Obviously, principles and objectives are not the same things. While principles are the guiding philosophical norms and values that lay at the root of long term formulation of a foreign policy, objectives are the concrete goals enmeshed in the overall national interests of a country which the foreign policy seeks to achieve in short or long run. Clearly, India's foreign policy has been underpinned by a number of cardinal principles and lofty objectives that impart it a distinguished character.

3.2 PRINCIPLES OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

India is one of the unique countries in the world that exhibits remarkable degree of traditional wisdom inherited from the hoary past along with its utmost consciousness of the contemporary norms of international relations. This is the precise reason that the principles of India's foreign policy are a marvelous bunch of philosophical stipulations that lay at the root of a peaceful, mutually beneficial, collaborative and cooperative international order. Though the design of many of these principles has been shaped by the certain domestic and international factors, in the main, these principles exhibit the conventional ethos of life lived by Indians over ages. At the same time, in the Realist framework of international politics, while some of these principles might seem utopian or quite far from the contemporary international scenario, what they definitely seek to convey is a blueprint of collective life in which all are healthy, happy and prosperous. As the ancient Indian dictum, called *kalyan mantra*, articulates the vision of India's foreign policy:

Sarvey bhavantu sukhinah, sarvey sant niramayah

Sarvey bhadrani pashyant, ma kashchid dukh bhagbhavet

It means, 'May all be happy; May all be free from illness; May all see what is auspicious; May no one suffer'.

What follows next is an illustrative discussion on the important principles of India's foreign policy.

3.2.1 Policy of Non-Alignment

Though slightly out of date in contemporary times, Non-alignment has remained the defining principle of India's foreign policy since its inception in the post-Independence period. This policy

needs to be viewed as a creative response of some of the newly independent countries particularly, India, Egypt and Indonesia to the gripping scenario of intense Cold War besieging the international relations at that particular point of time. Leaders of these countries evolved the policy of Non-alignment not only as a safety valve to escape the seemingly inescapable persuasions for joining either of the military blocs but also as a means of ensuring autonomy of their independent foreign policy making after securing their hard earned freedom from colonial masters. Thus, Jawaharlal Nehru, a key architect of the policy of Non-alignment and prime mover of India's foreign policy, explains the subtle implications of the policy in these memorable words: "Non-alignment means attempt by a nation to keep itself aloof from military blocs. It means trying to view the things, as far as possible, not from military point of view though that has to come in sometimes, but we must have independent view point and must have friendly relations with all countries." Since its inception, Non-alignment continues to be the guiding principle of India's foreign policy. It arguably served the national interests of the country well during some of the toughest times in the international politics. After the end of Cold War and disappearance of bipolar nature of international scenario, though aspersions have been cast on the continued relevance of the policy as the guiding principle of India's foreign policy, it may be argued that Non-alignment remains relevant albeit with altered locus and focus. As a result, significance of Non-alignment as a principle of India's foreign policy remains intact.

3.2.2 Panchsheel

While policy of Non-alignment was invented to act as the philosophical signpost of India's foreign policy vis-à-vis the wider international relations, doctrine of panchsheel was formulated to act as the bedrock of India's interface with its neighbours. Literally, panchsheel means a set of five principles of peaceful coexistence. These principles were enunciated in the treaty that India signed with China to set the trajectory of relations between the two countries. The five elements of the doctrine of panchsheel are: respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-aggression towards each other; non-interference in the internal affairs of each other; mutually beneficial relations based on equality; and peaceful co-existence. These principles were in fact nothing short of articles of faith for Nehru who appeared to turn oblivious to Chinese expansionist overtures to India. Thus, though scrupulous observance of the principles of panchsheel cost India dearly in terms of substantive loss of territory and notional loss of face in international community, she continues to be guided by these principles in setting the trajectory of its relations with its neighbours. At the larger scale, India professes these principles to be the guiding foundations of the foreign policies of different countries in all parts of the world. Only the observance of these principles could bring about and maintain long lasting peace in the neighborhood of different countries. In reality, since many of the countries defy

the principles of panchsheel, the obvious result is out in the form of continued conflict and armed struggles in different parts of the world.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discuss the significance of Non-alignment and panchsheel as the founding principles of India's foreign policy.

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3.2.3 Anti-Colonialism, Anti-Imperialism and Anti-Apartheid

Another profound principle of India's foreign policy has been its consistent stand against colonialism, imperialism and apartheid practiced and perpetrated by Western powers over peoples and societies in Africa, Asia and Latin America. India's opposition to these crimes against humanity is born out of her own long and torturous experiences under British rule. How a happy and prosperous country could be turned into the landscape of famine and starvation deaths with majority of the people in the country living a life of abject poverty was the hardest lesson that British colonialism taught to the Indians. The drain of wealth from India, destruction of its agriculture, crafts, physical infrastructure and administrative set up turned a prosperous and sophisticated society into abject poverty and ignorance. At the same time, India also shared the pains of all other countries of Asia and Africa which turned out to be battlegrounds for European powers vying with each other for more and more territories. Racial discrimination and heinous practices of colour-based discrimination amongst different people have also been alive in the memories of Indians as exemplified by father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi himself in South Africa. Hence, it came in the formulation of independent India's foreign policy. The principles of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and anti-apartheid were obviously taken as the guiding lights through which India would conduct her relations with the rest of the world. After that India not only stood in solidarity with the countries and peoples fighting against colonialism and imperialism but also refused to have any kind

relations with the apartheid regime of South Africa. Though these principles have no more remained as viable and meaningful as they used to be in the past, their relevance would probably remain intact as long as those tendencies continue to persist as foreign policy options for any country.

3.2.4 Avoidance of Force for Settlement of International Disputes

Prior to the First World War, use of force, aggression, annexation of territories were the standard and accepted methods of settlement of disputes among European imperial powers. India's cherished values of *satyagraha* and *ahimsa* have been accorded the place of pride in acting as the guiding principle of India's foreign policy. Apart from desisting herself from use of force as a means of settlement of any kinds of dispute, India has consistently been arguing for avoidance of force for settlement of international disputes by any country in any circumstance and at any point of time. This does not mean that India is oblivious of the fact that emergence of disputes is a normal phenomenon of international politics. On the contrary, what India urges is the use of pacific methods of dispute settlement so that any kind of violence and bloodshed can be avoided in the world. Given that there exists a comprehensive framework of pacific settlement of international disputes such as mediation, negotiation, good offices, adjudication, arbitration etc. both as part of United Nations Charter as well as international law, the parties in a dispute need to give preference for the use of those methods rather than going for all out war to settle the matter. Moreover, India has also been contributing its military and paramilitary forces for different kinds of peace keeping and peace building operation in various war-torn or trouble-prone regions of the world.

3.2.5 Belief in Ideals Enshrined in the UN Charter

India has the distinction of being one of the very few countries in the world that were invited to participate in the deliberations of UN Charter making at San Francisco and become an original signatory to the Charter despite remaining a colony at that point of time. This shows the recognition of India's traditional commitment to the virtues of international peace and security by the world. It is, therefore, natural that having unflinching belief in the ideals enshrined in the UN Charter remains a major principle of India's foreign policy. It has been the firm conviction of India that UN represents the best mechanism that the world could have visualized till date for the maintenance of international peace and security and avoid the occurrence of third world war. Further, through its work UN check the tendency of great powers to work arbitrarily. Multilateralism checks unilateralism and enables all the countries to work as equal and according to international law. Of late, though India has become critical of the structure and functioning of the UN terming it as ineffective and not representative of the power realities of today. The international relations have changed while UN continues to reflect the realities of the post-Second World War. It, nevertheless, remains steadfast in extending its support to UN in both cash and kinds. In order to streamline the structure of the UN, India has been

demanding for reforms in the UN Security Council, apart from improving its working procedure. Despite such critical observations at times, Indian support for the UN ideals, organisations, functioning and programmes of many of UN agencies has been matched by only a few countries in the world. Thus, India's foreign policy always takes the UN Charter as the basic rulebook of international relations and attempts to abide by that in letter and spirit.

3.2.6 Equitable and Egalitarian International Order

For obvious reasons, the post Second World War international order has been quite inequitable and inequalitarian. India and many other countries like her have been facing great degree of discrimination and prejudiced treatment in their dealings with the rest of the world. Hence, in the later years of the working of India's foreign policy, quest for an equitable and egalitarian international order became its important principle. Conceptually, the ideal of equitable and egalitarian international order consists of two basic components. On the one hand, equitability of the international order refers to the reforms in the political institutions at international level including the UN structures such as Security Council so that equitable representation could be ensured for the countries of Asia and Africa. Here, the demand is for the democratization of UN and its working. On the other, egalitarianism of international order specifically stands for the creation of a new international economic order. In fact, demand for a new international economic order has been in the air since the 1970s when some countries of Asia and Africa demanded equitable terms of trade and soft terms of economic assistance from the international lending agencies to the developing and underdeveloped countries. Though the fulfillment of the quest for an equitable and egalitarian international order does not seem to be in sight in the near future, it nevertheless remains a cherished dream and guiding principle of India's foreign policy that sooner or later such an international order would surely become a reality. Here, it is to be noted that developing world had started in the 1970s claiming right to development for all the nations and their peoples.

3.2.7 Faith in the Ideal of World Peace

It has been the firm belief of India that war and violence cannot provide lasting solution to any problem in the world. Hence, India has always been arguing for peaceful settlement of international disputes in such a way that they do not lead to any violent struggle in short or long run. As a natural corollary to such a perspective of international politics, India has taken its faith in the ideal of world peace as guiding principle of its foreign policy. It has, in fact, been argued in a number of circles that the threat to world peace and security is real at any given point of time and the outbreak of third world war is a distinct possibility. For instance, during the Cold War period, there arose a number of occasions for stand-off between the two super powers when war between the two became quite probable. After the end of Cold War, similar situations again arose in times of American war in Iraq

and Syrian conflict when the probability of a large scale war became quite imminent. Further, analysts argue that the next world war might take place on the pretext of water. Amidst such eventualities and forecasts, India's foreign policy has remained steadfast in its resolve for striving for world peace. Even in the contemporary times, it has been earnest effort of India to make the warring parties in a dispute to agree for discussion in order to reach a mutually agreeable solution to a given problem.

3.2.8 Bilateral Framework of Dispute Settlement

Since the signing of Shimla agreement between India and Pakistan to provide for the bilateral framework of resolving any dispute between the two countries, it has been consistent position of India that disputes between two countries should be left for them to resolve rather than the bigger powers joining the issue. The futility of multilateral framework of dispute settlement has been proved in a number of cases such as Afghanistan and therefore such disputes need not be tried to be resolved by the external forces. Bilateral framework of dispute settlement helps in the long lasting peace in the troubled region by two ways. One, when the two disputant parties agree to enter into a dialogue to settle the dispute, they also agree to stop any kind of hostility between them turning into hot pursuit during the process of negotiations. Thus, even if they are not able to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution to the given problem, the propensity of that dispute to turn into a war or violent clash remains nil. Secondly, with the passage of time, the intensity of a dispute is also likely to become less and less as a result of which its potential of becoming a flashpoint that can turn into a world war of sorts is reduced to zero. Hence, India's foreign policy keeps its faith in the ideal of world peace intact with the expectation that other countries would also share its belief sooner or later.

3.2.9 Disarmament

It has been the endeavour of India's foreign policy from day one to work hard for comprehensive and universal disarmament in the world. Even during the peak of the Cold War when escalation of arms race was reaching alarming proportions India had remained steadfast in its commitment for global disarmament. India's vision of disarmament ordinarily boils down to reduction, if not total elimination, of three kinds of arms by major producers and keepers of lethal arms. One, India calls for total elimination of the weapons of mass destruction such as chemical, biological, neurological, and such other gaseous weapons whose controlled use still eludes the scientist in the world. Two, India also urges for drastic curtailment in the quantity of nuclear and hydrogen bombs, intercontinental and other long range ballistic missiles etc. that are stockpiled in huge quantities in many countries. Finally, it seeks reduction in the stock of conventional weapons in different countries so that the probability of use of these weapons may be minimized in any eventuality. Despite standing for disarmament for a long time, the geostrategic scenario in the immediate

neighbourhood of the country itself is so dicey that India has to maintain a minimum degree of deterrence in terms of weapons and other logistics. Similarly, it had to go nuclear in order to meet the security challenges emanating from its neighbouring countries. In spite of such precautionary preparedness, Indian commitment to the global disarmament remains unequivocal and in consonance with its policy of working for world peace.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Analyze the guiding principles of India’s foreign policy in contemporary times.

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3.3 OBJECTIVES OF INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY

From its very inception, India’s foreign policy has been aimed at achieving certain objectives. While some of these objectives have remained a constant factor, others have been varying with fulfilled objectives being replaced by new ones. In the following paragraphs a brief analysis of objectives of India’s foreign policy is being presented.

3.3.1 Protection and Promotion of National Interests

Protection and promotion of the country’s national interests lies at the heart of India’s foreign policy. National interest, conceptually, is a very wide idea encompassing almost everything that is good for the country. But, generally, in concrete terms, national interest ranges from the national defence and security to the short term objectives that India’s foreign policy seeks to achieve in both bilateral as well as multilateral dealings with the rest of the world. Thus, after independence, the core of national interest involved zealously guarding the hard earned freedom of the country. This also focused on fortifying the defences of the country from both external and internal threats. At the same time, enhancement in the global standing of the country, contribution to the securing and maintenance of international peace and security, peaceful and mutually beneficial relations with the neighboring

countries etc. are some of the permanent markers of national interests of India. So, the conduct of India's foreign policy has precisely been visualized in such a way that it is able to secure such objectives to the maximum extent possible.

3.3.2 Autonomy of Independent Decision Making

In the Realist perspective, the realm of international relations is like a jungle where the mighty and resourceful nation is out to devour the weak and vulnerable ones. Thus, when India became independent, the international scenario was extremely dicey as the Cold War was in the air and the two super power appeared hell bent to wean away the newly independent nation to their side by any means. In those testing times, India's foreign policy could save the autonomy of independent decision making of the country through the innovative doctrine of Non-alignment. But even while carrying on with the policy of Non-alignment, India faced a number of occasional threats to its security and autonomy of independent decision making from the menacing overtures of both neighbouring and global powers. Yet, the credit must be given to India's foreign policy that it assiduously built such an image and prestige for the country in the arena of international relations that no country could dare to go beyond a point in anticipating India's adherence to their point of view. Though threats to the autonomy of independent decision making of India exist eve today also, albeit in a different form, India's foreign policy has indeed worked hard to ward off all such threats formidably. Moreover, a number of other countries in Asia and Africa now look to India for providing them a sense of security and ensuring their autonomy in the uncertain world where bigger fishes are always out to predate the vulnerable nations.

3.3.3 Economic Drivers of Foreign Policy

Economic interests have always been at the heart of the pursuits of India's foreign policy. Interestingly while many other objectives of India's foreign policy have faded away to insignificance, economic objectives have remained as vibrant they used to be at the time of independence. When India gained independence, it was beset with twin economic challenges of arranging for adequate food grains to feed the teeming millions, as well as to secure capital and technology from the developed nations so as to set the country on the path of economic growth and prosperity. Fulfillment of such economic interests appeared quite challenging at that time given the dynamics of Cold War and India's insistence on policy of Non-alignment as the functional framework of her relations with the super powers. In such a scenario, India's foreign policy really acted in very judicious and farsighted manner to arrange supply of sufficient quantity of wheat from as many countries particularly the US as possible without compromising the autonomous decision making of the country. It was not an easy task; even food aid came with conditions attached. In contemporary times, the major drivers of India's foreign policy remain the economic ones as it seeks

to deepen its economic relations through the policy measures like Act East Policy, prioritizing investment in African countries and creation of a number of multilateral frameworks for enhanced economic cooperation amongst leading economies of the East. That way, economic drivers have really remained the eternal objectives of India's foreign policy which have truly been skillfully achieved by it at different periods of time.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) What have been the conventional objectives of India's foreign policy? Discuss.

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3.3.4 Global Counter Terror Framework

Over the years, terrorism has emerged as the most formidable challenge not only to the safety and well being of the common people but also to the greater cause of international peace and security. Moreover, India happens to be one of the important countries that have been bearing the brunt of this monster. Hence, for quite some time, evolution of global counter terror framework has become the major objective of India's foreign policy. India's quest for a global counter terror convention primarily hinges on three basic strategies. To begin with, it urges the international community to recognize international terrorism as a challenge to humanity per se and therefore desist from distinguishing between 'good' terrorism and 'bad' terrorism. Once such a distinction is wiped out, the international community must identify the countries, places and people who provide safe support bases to global terrorists, and declare them as global terror hubs. Secondly, India also seeks to evolve an international treaty against terrorism through which all kinds of financial, material and moral support to the terrorist groups are squeezed out so that they are forced to die a natural death. Finally, India also urges for sharing of information and intelligence inputs amongst the countries and enhanced cooperation amongst them in counter terror operations in individual countries. It has in fact been a constant endeavour of India's foreign policy to highlight the demand for global counter terror

framework at all available forums including the UN. Though an international declaration or global framework has still not been evolved as per India's expectation, there cannot be denying the fact that the global community has surely been awakened from their slumber to rise to the grave risks of international terrorism on time before it is too late for them to act decisively.

3.3.5 Equitable Environmental Protection Framework

In contemporary times, protection of environment has emerged as a collective challenge for all the countries. Unwise and disastrous growth patterns of the previous centuries have tended to reduce the natural defence mechanism of environment into shambles. As a result, humanity is likely to face the onslaughts of nature beyond their bearing capacity. Hence, global parley are underway for quite a long time to evolve and implement an international framework of environmental protection so that further harm to environment could be avoided. However, in the multilateral parleys, onus of bearing the brunt of such remedial measures is increasingly put on the poor and backward countries. Hence, it has been a consistent endeavor of India's foreign policy to work for the evolution of an equitable environmental protection framework in which the developed countries share greater responsibility of environmental protection. This is called the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility' meaning thereby that while conservation and protection of environment is the common responsibility of all, those who have caused damage to environment for the sake of their development should bear more responsibility. The task of development in countries cannot and should not get hampered by the plea to save environment. Moreover, it is in this context that countries like India are demanding that developed countries should provide latest environmental-friendly technology and sufficient economic support to the poor and backward countries to help them mount relentless efforts for environmental protection. Though India's foreign policy has succeeded to a large extent in making global negotiations on environmental protection just and fair, a lot still needs to be done so that the poor and backward countries are compensated enough for the losses incurred by them in joining global moves towards environmental protection.

3.3.6 Non-Discriminatory Technology Transfer Regimes

A profound objective of India's foreign policy has been its quest for a non-discriminatory nature of technology transfer regimes. As a matter of fact, right from when the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) came into existence, India has found itself in the vortex of vociferous opposition to such discriminatory regimes. India considers NPT and several other technology-controlled regimes of the West as basically technology-denial practices of the developed countries. Indeed, the march of international relations over the years has been so that India did not find it opportune to sign the various technology transfer regimes given the inherent discriminatory nature of such frameworks. The basic difficulty before India has been that by virtue of being a permanent member of the UN

Security Council and one of the five nuclear powers, China gets a chance to participate in the technology transfer regimes on a pedestal different from India. However, when it comes for India to sign these regimes, it refuses to sign them citing the prevailing ambience in its neighborhood in which one of its immediate neighbour possess such technologies which these regimes seek to deny to India. Hence, for a long period of time, it has been the objective of India's foreign policy to secure non-discriminatory technology transfer regimes so that no country in the world is denied access to advance technologies meant for peaceful use in the interest of wider humanity.

3.3.7 Diaspora and Soft Power

For the last few years, India's foreign policy has also sought to use the wide spread Indian diaspora in different parts of the world for advancing the cause of the nation. It has indeed been an inalienable part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy vision that Indian diaspora must be effectively used to make them aware of the value of their motherland and think of contributing to the cause of their native country. Interestingly, whenever Modi embarks on the visit of a foreign country, his itinerary most of the times includes a session of his interaction with the diaspora to convey to them the message of their duty towards their motherland. At the same time, the government also seems quite anxious to use the soft power of India to establish the reputation of the country from a land of elephants and snake charmers to that of a vibrant and prosperous people who are capable to bring about spectacular turnarounds in any kind of environment. Indian foreign policy's hard push for acceptance of June 25 as International Day of Yoga and October 2 as the International Day of Peace and Non-Violence are indicators of its greater reliance on showcasing India's soft power as a tool of Indian foreign policy.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discuss the changing objectives of India's foreign policy.

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3.4 LET US SUM UP

Principles and objectives of India's foreign policy have helped give it a distinct character in the international politics. Originating out of long historical and cultural traditions of the country and the hard-headed appraisal of the working of international political system, these principles and objectives have acted as the beacon light to guide the Indian foreign policy through the thick and thin of international relations. Though most of these principles and objectives have remained a sort of permanent fixtures on the landscape of India's interactions with the rest of the world, at occasions, newer principles and objectives have also found place on the menu of Indian foreign policy.

3.5 SOME USEFUL REFERENCES

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3.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Your answer should focus on contextual discussion of Non-alignment and elements of panchsheel. Your answer should be based on reading of the Section 3.2 and in particular subsections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Highlight the principles of India's foreign policy in particular anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and anti-apartheid; peaceful settlement of disputes; support for UN and its multilateralism and disarmament. Your answer should be based on reading of Section 3.2.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Your answer needs to include the points such as national interests, autonomy of decision making and economic drivers of India's foreign policy. Your answer should be based on the reading of Section 3.3.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

- 1) Include in this answer, the contemporary objectives such as global counter-terrorism framework and equitable environmental protection framework, among others. Base your answer on Section 3.3.



UNIT – 4 MAKING OF INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY: INSTITUTIONS AND MECHANISMS

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Complexities in Making of India’s Foreign Policy
- 4.3 Institutions of Foreign Policy Making in India
 - 4.3.1 Ministry of External Affairs
 - 4.3.2 Prime Minister’s Office
 - 4.3.3 Cabinet Committee on Security
 - 4.3.4 National Security Advisor
 - 4.3.5 Parliament
 - 4.3.6 Parliamentary Committees
 - 4.3.7 Policy Think Tanks
- 4.4 Mechanism of Foreign Policy Making in India
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Some Useful References
- 4.7 Answer to Check Your Progress Exercises

4.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit seeks to acquaint the students with the institutions and mechanisms involved in the making of India’s foreign policy. After reading this Unit, the students should be able to:

- Understand the complexities in the making of India’s foreign policy;
- Appreciate the role of different governmental institutions in making of India’s foreign policy;
- Evaluate the role of policy think tanks in providing valuable inputs for the making of India’s foreign policy; and
- Explain the mechanism of foreign policy making in India

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Making of India’s foreign policy is a complex and long drawn process. A host of individuals, institutions and experts with domain knowledge and technical support staff is involved in it. Persuasions for adoption of a particular policy alternative may come from any quarter but the final product in terms of concrete policy decision of the Ministry of External Affairs is taken only after

wide ranging discussions and weighing probable pros and cons of opting for a particular course of action. On a broader scale, the framework of making of India's foreign policy is ordained by the adoption of parliamentary system of government in the country. In this system, though the policy measures are initiated by the executive, the final approval for the adoption and execution of a policy needs to be obtained from the legislature. That way, some sort of accountability is sought to be established for those who are at the helms of steering the external relations of the country. What follows next is an elaborate discussion on complexities, actors, institutions and mechanisms involved in the making of foreign policy in India.

4.2 COMPLEXITIES IN MAKING OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

For a layman, foreign policy of India is made by the officials belonging to the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) sitting in the majestic ambience of South Block on the Raisina Hills in New Delhi. However, such an impression of the making of India's foreign policy tells only part story of the whole process. As a matter of fact, making of India's foreign policy, and for that matter, foreign policy of any other country as well, is a very cumbersome process consuming so much of time and energy. Moreover, making of consensual policies like the foreign policy in a country including India is more in the nature of incremental additions or deletions than carrying out a radical transformation in an existing policy, though there may arise occasions when creative policy options might be needed to respond to a novel situation. For instance, India for long has been following the policy of a close friendship with the former Soviet Union. But when this giant monolith fell apart leading to emergence of the United States as the sole super power in the world, India's foreign policy found itself in a tricky position to respond to such a novel unfolding of events in the international relations. Nevertheless, such situations are rare, and in most of the times, foreign policy making involves bringing about incremental changes in the existing ones to suit the requirements of a transformed global scenario.

Foreign policy making in India takes place at different levels involving different sets of peoples and institutions in varying capacities. For example, foreign policy in India is made at two distinct levels: macro and micro. Similarly, the involvement of various institutions and individuals in this process is not of same degree and scale. While many of the key foreign policy making institutions and individuals are required to give their hundred percent at the highest scale of their competence in order to work out the nuances of the policy, certain institutions are required to just put their stamp on the policy in order to either meet some statutory requirement or give greater legitimacy and acceptability to the policy.

Foreign policy making at macro level involves the higher bodies and individuals responsible for giving overall direction and control of the structures and processes of government in the country. The

institutions and individuals taking part in the process of foreign policy making at this level are the ones who are not expected to be specialists in the theories and practices of diplomacy and foreign policy so as to give their specific inputs into the process of making of foreign policy. On the contrary, they are generalists in their perspective and the criteria on which they try to assess the veracity of the foreign policy are the broader national interests to which the policy is made. The most important institution at this level is the Parliament which seeks to review and approve all the policy measures of government from the perspective of broader national interests. Whatsoever scientific scrutiny of the foreign policy is done at this level is done by the Parliamentary Committees having some members who might have specialized knowledge of external affairs of the country. Otherwise, foreign policy making at this level is more formalistic than analytical in nature.

The real actions with regard to the making of foreign policy in India takes place at the micro level. At the core of this level lies the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) which gets active support and inputs from the scientific and technical institutions and individuals working in the field of strategic and foreign affairs. The inputs for making, unmaking or modifying a foreign policy alternative may come from any quarter but the destination of all such inputs is the relevant division in the MEA. Apart from MEA, another significant institution working very closely with the MEA on the foreign policy making is the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) which, in fact, works as the conscience keeper of the external relations of India. In the times of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, PMO is sometimes seen to be working as parallel organization to MEA in running the foreign affairs of the country. Still, during the tenure of other Prime Ministers as well, role of PMO in foreign policy making has been very critical. Thus, right from evolving the blueprint of the foreign policy to giving the final shape to such a policy, the institutions and individuals working at the micro level play the most important roles.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discuss the complexities in making of India's foreign policy.

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4.3 INSTITUTIONS OF FOREIGN POLICY MAKING IN INDIA

In the complicated process of foreign policy making, different institutions discharge their responsibilities directly or indirectly. The institutions that are statutorily ordained to be in charge of running the foreign affairs of the country, such as MEA, act as the pivot of the foreign policy making. However, since the MEA cannot be the repository of all the knowledge, inputs and insights on diverse issues and challenges facing India on its external frontiers, a number of other actors are also assigned certain responsibilities in the making of the country's foreign policy.

4.3.1 Ministry of External Affairs

Foreign policy making in India begins and concludes with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Staffed primarily with the members of the IFS, MEA is headed by the Minister of External Affairs on the political side and Foreign Secretary on the administrative side. Foreign Secretary is flanked by Secretary (East), Secretary (West), Secretary (Economic Affairs) and Secretary (CPV and Overseas Indian Affairs). Foreign Secretary and each of the Secretaries head and coordinate a number of Divisions and agencies. Though the administrative structure of the MEA is patterned on the standard organizational structure of the ministries of Government of India, there exists sufficient degree of flexibility in the organizational structure and functional procedures of the ministry. All the initiatives for foreign policy making are received and processed in the MEA. Despite having its own well equipped research and development wing, inputs for making of foreign policy are also received from a number of both governmental and non-governmental institutions and individuals. The officials of the ministry are well trained, experienced, talented and analytically profound individuals who usually have knack of the finer issues of diplomacy and international affairs. The basic operating framework of the ministry is provided by the broad vision of national interests of India which all the policy decisions and activities of MEA seek to serve. Important inputs in the making of India's foreign policy are also provided by the external intelligence of the country, namely, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). Though the controlling agency of RAW is the Cabinet Secretariat, its functions very much relate to the core activities of MEA. Thus, it would be fine to call MEA as the pivot around which the foreign policy making of India revolves.

4.3.2 Prime Minister's Office

Under the Parliamentary form of government, Prime Minister is the executive head of the government. In that capacity, it is expected that s/he would be well versed with the policy initiatives of the government emanating at different levels. Given that foreign policy is one of the most

significant aspects of governmental activities, Prime Ministers have invariably been very alert and participative in the process of foreign policy making. Hence, after the MEA, the next important institution playing key role in the making of India's foreign policy is the PMO. It, in fact, is the secretariat that provides technical and secretarial support to Prime Minister to enable him keep track of the activities of government and provide valuable inputs and guidance to the different agencies. Insofar as making of foreign policy is concerned, PMO gets to play a more active role especially during the reign of activist Prime Ministers such as Narendra Modi. Even in routine course of action, the policy decisions taken by the MEA are presented before the PMO for perusal and approval of the Prime Minister in case he does not have any modifications to suggest in those policies. The foreign policy initiatives evolved by MEA come to their final shape only when they get approval from the Prime Minister. Thus, PMO happens to be the critical agency that provides finality to the foreign policy initiatives.

4.3.3 National Security Advisor

Prime Minister's take on the matters of foreign policy is generally determined by the inputs provided by National Security Advisor (NSA). NSA is the executive head of the National Security Council (NSC) created during the reign of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1998. Though demand for the creation of NSC has been made quite often even since the period of Nehru, it could not be created for obvious reasons. In the absence of NSC, Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) used to be the political wing to take decision on the matters of foreign policy and national security. In the place of NSA, all the Prime Ministers before Vajpayee used to have one of his/her close confident substituting for NSA to advise the Prime Ministers on critical issues of national interests. Contemporaneously NSC is headed by the Prime Minister and has a number of political and administrative appointees as members to formulate suggestions for the government on issues of national security including foreign policy. However, in the main, the substantive responsibility of NSC is carried on the shoulders of the NSA who remains in touch with the Prime Minister one on one to keep him abreast of the latest happenings inside and outside the country. In present times, NSA seems to be the extended persona of the Prime Minister given his very activist role in shaping the security and foreign policies of the government. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy acumen and forays are presumably based on the inputs provided by NSA Ajit Doval.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discern the administrative organisations involved in the foreign policy making in India.

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4.3.4 Cabinet Committee on Security

It is a well known fact that in the parliamentary system of government, collective responsibility of the cabinet is taken as the sacrosanct principle. However, such a collective responsibility could be sought only when the cabinet takes collective decisions on all the issues and matters before it. In this regard, the committee entrusted with the task of taking collective decision relating to the issues of national security and foreign policy is known as the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). It is headed by the Prime Minister and consists of all the important ministers heading the ministries critical to national security of the country. In India, as a customary practice, the decisions relating to India’s foreign policy and finalized at the level of MEA, PMO, etc. are placed before the CCS for its consideration and final approval. Though CCS has never been heard of reversing any of the foreign policy decisions initiated by MEA and finalized by PMO, it surely retains the right of discussing the issues at hand and members could indeed offer valuable suggestions if they feel strongly on that. But, on the whole, role of the CCS in making of the foreign policy decisions in India are more formal and customary than substantive one having major bearing on the decisions already taken. Nevertheless, CCS remains an important institution of foreign policy making within the broader framework of parliamentary system of the country.

4.3.5 Parliament

Parliament is the custodian of public conscience in India. It not only acts as the fountainhead out of which the government gets its shape but also remains the pivot of ensuring accountability of the government throughout its existence. So, whatever the government decides to do or not to do, it has to take approval of parliament. That way, most, if not all, of the decisions relating to the foreign policy of the country is placed before the two houses of parliament for their consideration and approval. Generally, parliament contributes to making of the foreign policy of India in three ways. Firstly, while debating the decisions of government, members of parliament articulate different perspectives on the subject. Apart from advancing arguments in support of the government’s decisions, members also express their critical appreciation of the policy that help the government get

the alternative perspectives to its decisions. Thus, parliamentary debates tend to articulate the wider range of public opinion on a given policy decision of the government. Secondly, on occasions, parliament also acts to suggest modifications in a particular policy decision of the government. Though such suggestions have very less chance of getting through the house, they, nonetheless, make government aware of feelings of the members on the issue. Finally, when parliament accords its approval to the policy decisions of the government, such decisions become consensual approach of the country towards a given subject and tend to carry much more weight than a policy measure offered without the approval of parliament. Thus, though parliament plays only indirect role in the making of India's foreign policy, that role is unquestionably quite eminent.

4.3.6 Parliamentary Committees

More substantive role in the making of India's foreign policy is played by parliamentary committees than parliament itself. Obviously, parliament's role as an institution of foreign policy making is quite compromised for two reasons. One, parliament as a deliberative body is too large in size to be able to play any meaningful role in contributing to the quality or content of the policy. Two, members of parliament might also lack technical or scientific acumen to understand the nuances of foreign affairs and make critical contribution to its formulation. Hence, conventionally, provisions have been made in the parliamentary procedures for parliamentary committees to deal with such issues in detail. Parliamentary committees are in fact the advisory bodies consisting of members drawn from both the houses of parliament. Initially, there existed the consultative committees of parliament to give their inputs on the issues of foreign policy making. With the formation of standing committees of parliament, Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs has become the most important committee to look into the issues of foreign affairs on behalf of the parliament. Consisting of members of both the houses, this committee keeps a constant watch on the working of the MEA and reviews the policies and decisions taken by the ministry with regard to the external affairs of the country. Thus, parliamentary committees also play significant though indirect role in the making of foreign policy of India.

4.3.7 Policy Think Tanks

In the making of India's foreign policy, policy think tanks have special role to play. These think tanks are non-governmental, non-profit organisations engaged in study and research on different aspects of India's strategic and foreign affairs. Contemporaneously, important of such think tanks are Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF). These think tanks are actively engaged in carrying out scholarly research and surveys on different aspects of India's strategic and foreign policies. They publish occasional research papers and policy briefs to make policy interventions in the formulation of foreign policy of the country. Staffed by professional

researchers as well as former diplomats and practitioners of strategic and foreign affairs of the country, these think tanks carry the unique blend of theory and practice of foreign affairs. The vitality of these think tanks in the formulation of India's security and foreign policies could be gauged from the fact that a number of individuals working with these organisations have now been given important responsibilities in the present government. At the same time, these organisations are also roped in by the government to act as the co-sponsors of important policy dialogues such as Raisina Dialogue on strategic and foreign policies of India.

The role of these think tanks in the making of India's foreign policy is generally consultative and advisory in nature. In the course of their researches and studies on different aspects of India's strategic and foreign policies, they accumulate a treasure trove of valuable knowledge and insights. It is these knowledge and insights that become the basic strength of these organisations. Governments generally seek advice of these think tanks in times of unconventional circumstances when there does not exist any past precedent to fall back upon for making of the foreign policy. At times, these think tanks come out with their innovative analysis of a situation which might catch the attention of the policy makers. Think tanks have been part of American policy making process since very long. But in India they are not a very old phenomenon. But looking at the ways they work and contribute to the making of India's foreign policy, it is quite reassuring that these non-governmental organisations could surely be a valuable asset in the making of the country's foreign policy. Though certain degree of caution might be required to involve the think tanks in the process of foreign policy making, they in no way can be written off from the process of decision making in the contemporary times.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discuss the political organisations involved in the foreign policy making in India.

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4.4 MECHANISM OF FOREIGN POLICY MAKING IN INDIA

There exists a comprehensive mechanism of foreign policy making in India. This mechanism works in a seamless manner in such a way that there does not appear to be any scope for any rupture in the beads that combine together to give final shape to what is called as foreign policy of the country. In this circular mechanism, the unfolding circumstances or other global persuasions keep on adding new inputs on the agenda of the foreign policy makers who process and update the existing framework of foreign policy. However, as has already been pointed out, foreign policy of India has generally been a consensual exercise where there does not exist much scope for radical transformation in the policy. On very rare occasions, foreign policy decisions of a government are challenged and opposed by a wider mass of people. Otherwise, incremental transformations in the subsisting foreign policy are either not noticed or noticed by certain degree of indifference by general public. Yet, the mechanism of foreign policy making in India needs to be alert and active all the times in order offer quick responses to the unfolding international situations.

The mechanism of foreign policy making in India revolves around the MEA which is the primary institution for formulation of India's foreign policy. The existing foreign policy framework provides the operational base for the ministry to activate the mechanism of foreign policy making. Inputs for the making of a foreign policy decision may come from any quarter – both official as well as non-official. Once concrete inputs are received with regard to certain aspect of India's national interests including its defense, economic interests, vision of international politics, territorial integrity, difficulties before India diaspora in any part of the world, the mechanism of foreign policy making comes into action. After background study and feedback from the concerned experts on the subject, a definite policy alternative is evolved at the level of offices of the ministry. Such proposals are then placed before the minister of external affairs for her perusal and testing the political connotations of the alternative in accordance with the philosophy and ideology of the party in power. Once, the minister gives her nod for the given policy alternative, the same is forwarded to the PMO for consideration of the Prime Minister.

Since Prime Minister is the overall custodian of India's relations with the rest of the world, the policy proposal of the MEA undergoes close scrutiny of the prime minister. In this exercise, the prime minister is assisted in the main by the NSA who is supposed to take holistic view of the country's security and foreign policies with a view not only to rule out any inconsistency between the two but also to make sure they work in tandem with each other to secure the national interests of the country in full measure. Additionally, the prime minister is also expected to assess the financial, strategic and political implications of the policy proposal in order to make that acceptable to all the members of cabinet once the proposal goes to the cabinet or its committee for discussion and final approval. Thus, by way of scrutiny on the part of the prime minister, the foreign policy proposal, in fact, gets

vetted by a wide range of stakeholders. At this level, the proposal is liable for any kind of modification or addition or deletion without much ruckus given the preliminary stage at which the proposal is pending.

After getting approval of the prime minister, the policy proposal goes to the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) for wider discussion amongst the political heavyweights who constitute the CCS. In this committee, not only the foreign minister is there to respond to the queries of any of the members of the Committee but are also other important ministers such as ministers of finance, home, defence, among others. These ministers seek to evaluate the policy proposal from the perspective of their particular ministries so that it does not contradict or come in the way of any policy followed by that ministry. At this level, defence for the policy proposal comes not only from the minister of external affairs but also the prime minister himself given his previous consent for that policy. Generally, the policy proposals of MEA are not rejected, if not modified, at this level as all the important stakeholders have already extended their approval for the policy. Nevertheless, the consideration of the policy proposal at the level of the CCS is a major link in the mechanism of foreign policy making in India given its statutory and political meaning in the future processing of the policy.

Though most, if not all, of the policy proposals of MEA get converted into foreign policy for being put into practice after their approval by the CCS, at times certain proposals are placed before the houses of parliament for its consideration and passage. The presentation of foreign policy proposals before the houses of parliament is a tactical move on the part of the government to garner wider public support for such a proposal or to ward off any ensuing opposition to such proposals by certain sections of society. Anyway, with or without its presentation before the houses of parliament, a policy proposal of the MEA becomes part of India's foreign policy after its approval by the CCS. Afterwards, that policy is put into practice with a close watch on its impact and ramifications. Then, any measure of foreign policy, that policy also becomes a tool to serve the national interests of the country with possibility of its review as and when valuable inputs are available for its reconsideration. Thus, the mechanism of foreign policy making in India is quite elaborate and full of checks and balances in order to ensure quality check of the policy at more than one level.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discuss the mechanism of making of India's foreign policy.

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4.5 LET US SUM UP

The utility and veracity of the institutions and mechanism of foreign policy making in India have been proved beyond doubt by looking at their working over the years. But on a close scrutiny of these institutions and mechanisms, two significant trends could be underlined. Firstly, foreign policy in any country has generally been a matter of consensus amongst all the sections of society as well as academia. But in view of the vast diversity in the social, economic, linguistic and territorial dimensions of India, there arises occasions with regard to specific policy measures, when certain sections of people try to look at the issue from a parochial perspective casting aspersion on the sanctity of national interest. In such cases, the government of India needs to be assertive enough to push for the policy which it deems appropriate despite spirited opposition to such policies. In other words, there is need for certain degree of stridency in the institutions and mechanism of foreign policy making in India so that the policies aimed at protecting and promoting national interests of the country are carried through despite the opposition of certain vested sections of society. Secondly, for a long period of time, Indian foreign policy has generally been reactive to the unfolding of circumstances both within and outside the country. Such a policy perspective need not be the preferred method of conducting a foreign policy especially for an aspiring great power like India. Almost all the major countries seeking greater role for themselves in the international relations have been found to be pursuing a proactive foreign policy. Though it is true that nothing can be said with certainty in the realm of foreign policy and international relations given the unforeseen turn of events within and outside the country, yet it would probably be better method of conducting a foreign policy to be proactive than reactive even during the normal times

In sum, though the institutions and mechanism of making of India's foreign policy have been doing fairly well, there is need for a relook at the structural vibrancy and functional dynamism of these bodies in order to shake them from their conventional slumber. The contemporary international scenario is witnessing rapid changes both in terms of reemergence of maverick leaders in different parts of the world as well as the rapid advances in the tools and techniques of conducting the foreign policy. On the strength of the support coming from cutting edge inventions in the fields of science

and technology, countries are trying to achieve the seemingly unachievable objectives of their foreign policy. In such a scenario, the institutions and mechanism of India's foreign policy making cannot remain closeted within their comfort zones at the South Block. They need to be creative enough to not only react well to the unfolding situations but also imaginative enough to perceive or imagine the hypothetical state of affairs in the times to come so that the foreign policy establishment can be readied to serve the national interests of the country well.

4.6 SOME USEFUL REFERENCES

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Muchkund Dubey, *India's Foreign Policy*, Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2007

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4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Your answer need to focus on the interplay of different factors lying at the root of making of India's foreign policy. Your answer should be based on Section 4.2

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) The answer should emphasize upon the role of Ministry of External Affairs, Prime Minister's Office and National Security Advisor. Carefully read Section 4.3 to write your answer.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Highlight the role of institutions such as parliament, parliamentary committees and cabinet committee on security in your answer. Read carefully and blend subsections 4.3.4, 4.3.5 and 4.3.6 to write your answer.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

- 1) Your answer should include explanation of the distinct role of different agencies and linkages in the role performance by them, as has been delineated in Section 4.4.