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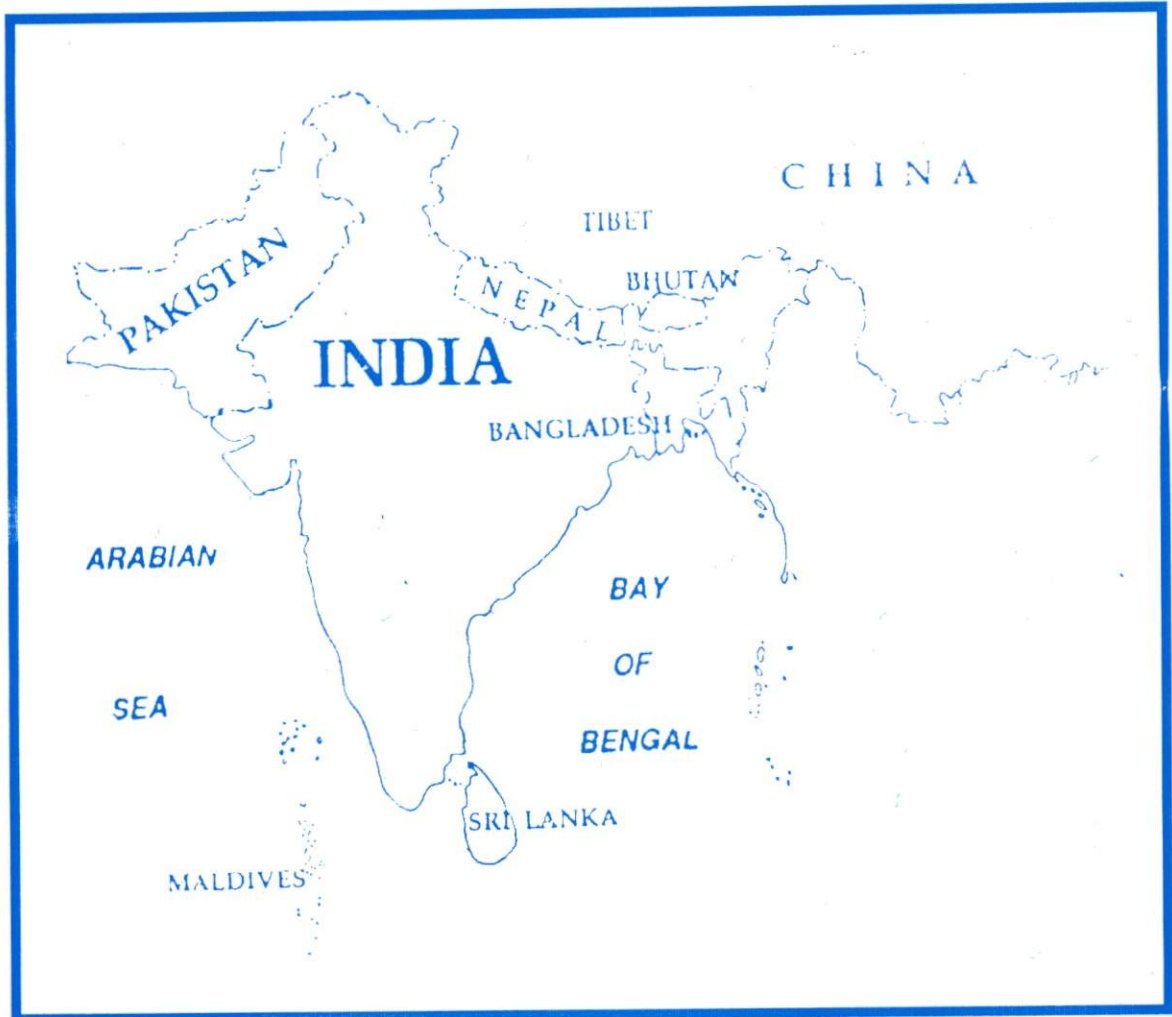


KARNATAKA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY
Mukthagangothri, Mysore - 570 006

Political Science
M.A. (Final)

English Medium

India and Her Neighbours



Course - V

Block - I

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**Karnataka State
Open University**

**Political Science
Course V**

Block

1

Introduction

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Course V

Course Introduction

India and Her Neighbours is prescribed as one of the courses of Political Science in MA(Final). It contains many educative issues, interactions, problems that are confronting between India and her neighbouring countries. Moreover, it also throws a light on how issues emerge between India and her neighbouring nations and also how they can be tided over resorting to amicable relations.

It is Sine- quo - non that the position of nation and success or failure of a foreign policy of a country largely banks upon its relations with her neighbouring nations. Keeping in mind the importance of the study of relations between India and Pakistan, Buthan, Nepal, China, Srilanka and Bangladesh, this subject has been included in this course. The comprehension of wide range of relations among these countries, will enlighten and broaden the mental horizen of the students in probing the areas of conflicts, tensions etc., In the backdrop of this, the study of this course has become all the more important.

The Course I has been configured in accordance with self Instructional Mode (SIM). It contains 7 Blocks written in 28 units dealing with the relations of India with her neighbours.

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Block I - Introduction

Block I contains five units from 1 to 5. Unit one deals with the Evolution of India's Foreign Policy. Unit two deals with the Basic Principles of India's Foreign Policy. Unit three deals with the India's neighbourhood diplomacy. Unit four deals with the India as a dominant South Asian Power. Unit five deals with the India's agenda for regional co-operation.

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The Indian National Congress and India's Foreign Policy in British India
- 1.3 Jawaharlal Nehru's Role in Laying The Foundation of India's Foreign Policy
- 1.4 Let us Sum Up
- 1.5 Key Words
- 1.6 Some Useful Books
- 1.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the evolution of India's foreign policy.
- Appreciate the position taken by the Indian National Congress on Foreign Policy issues during the 62 years of its existence, prior to Independence; and
- Understand the all-important role played by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in laying the foundations of India's Foreign Policy.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The major determinants and motivations, which shaped India's foreign policy, are many and complex. The ancient Indian moralistic tradition (of Buddha and Asoka), Gandhi's influence on the country's freedom struggle, national interest, and the international situation in the post-Second World War era were the main factors, which shaped the policy. Though the course of India's foreign policy was charted much before 1947, it is nevertheless true that many of her post-1947 preoccupations – concern with world peace, sympathy for anti-colonialist and anti-racialist causes, and a conception of India's importance in world affairs – were pre-figured in the vital positions taken by the Indian National Congress on several foreign policy issues facing British India. It is also equally true that if there was one man who played a pioneering role in laying the foundations of India's foreign policy, and giving it a unique moral dimension, it was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

From a recognition of the above, three points emerge:

1. India's foreign policy had been well-conceptualized and thought out, even before she attained Independence;
2. Jawaharlal Nehru was able to build on his rich experience to carve out a unique role for India's foreign policy in the post-War world;
3. India's foreign policy has always emphasized ethical and value-based dimensions, even while pursuing its national interest.

1.2 THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN BRITISH INDIA

For a proper understanding of the evolution of India's foreign policy, a study of the role of the Indian National Congress, since inception, is necessary. In the words of Norman D. Palmer, "In the position taken by the Indian National Congress, on many issues of international import during the sixty-two years of its existence prior to Independence, may be found the immediate roots of the foreign policy of Independent India."

A study of the Resolutions passed by the Indian National Congress will reveal that the Congress took a deep interest in certain external questions from its inception, and that it based its position on certain fundamental principles which still shape the foreign policy of India today:

- A Resolution passed at the very first session of the Congress in 1885 condemned the annexation of Upper Burma by the British.
- In 1892, the Congress objected to "the military activity going on beyond the natural lines of the defences of this country, in pursuance of the imperial policy of Great Britain in its relation with some of the Great Powers of Europe.
- In 1904, the Congress objected to the use of India as a base for political manoeuvring or military moves against surrounding areas such as Tibet, Burma, Afghanistan and Persia. A Resolution of that year asserted that an expedition to Tibet was "but part of a general forward policy, which threatens to involve India in foreign entanglements." In the words of Dr. N.V. Rajkumar, (a 'Foreign Secretary' of the Indian National Congress, who compiled the major Resolutions of the Congress relating to foreign affairs): "This Resolution was perhaps the earliest expression of India's dislike of getting involved in unnecessary foreign entanglements and favouring a neutral stand on matters that did not concern her."
- In 1920, the Congress sent "a message of sympathy to the Irish people in their struggle for Independence".
- The meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Delhi in 1921 was "a landmark in the history of India's foreign relations".

- (a) For the first time, the Congress passed a general resolution on foreign policy, which included the statement that “the present Government of India in no way represents Indian opinion”. According to Dr. Rajkumar, “This Resolution is important in as much as it was the first significant declaration on the part of nationalist India that its interests in the field of foreign policy were diametrically opposed to those of Britain.”
- (b) It further laid down the bases of an independent India’s foreign policy – anti-imperialism, liberal internationalism, and the like.

An analysis of this historic declaration would show that the fundamental principles guiding Free India’s foreign policy today, can be traced back to it.

- A Resolution of the Congress in 1925 authorized the All-India Congress Committee to open a Foreign Department under it “to look after the interests of Indians abroad and to carry on educative propaganda in the country regarding their position in the British Empire and foreign countries”. Three years later, after another reminder from the annual session of the Congress, the AICC did set up a Foreign Department, with Jawaharlal Nehru at its head. From that time, till his demise in 1964, Nehru’s was the major voice of India in foreign affairs. This is a record unparalleled among the leading democratic statesmen of the twentieth century. It helps to explain the remarkable consistency in Indian foreign policy, and serves as a reminder that the policy had evolved in most of its fundamentals, much before 1947.
- The Congress session in Madras in 1927 passed a Resolution of protest against the use of Indian troops in China, Mesopotamia, and Persia, and deplored the “extensive war preparations, which the British Government is carrying on in India”. Nearly thirty years later, Jawaharlal Nehru stated that the foundations of India’s foreign policy had been laid down at the Madras session of the Congress in 1927.
- The 1928 Congress session at Calcutta sent its greetings to the peoples of Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Iraq, “in their struggle for emancipation from the grip of Western imperialism”, and authorized the appointment of a representative to the Second World Congress of the League Against Imperialism to be held in 1929. “These Resolutions,” states Dr. Rajkumar, “gave the first indication that India’s national leaders were

thinking in terms of a Pan-Asian movement to resist European imperialism”.

- In many Resolutions of the late 1930s, the Congress condemned the aggressive acts of the Nazis and Fascists, but it also declared that it would not be a party to “imperialist war”.
- At the Tripura session in 1939, the Congress strongly disapproved the British foreign policy and disassociated itself from it. The Resolution stated: In the opinion of the Congress, it is urgently necessary for India to direct her own foreign policy as an independent nation, thereby keeping aloof from both imperialism and fascism, and pursuing her path of peace and freedom.
- When the Second World War began, the Congress Working Committee, in a lengthy Resolution, echoed the attitude of the Congress toward the War: The issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people ... Their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her. The Congress ministries in the Provinces resigned in protest against the British policy, and the Congress refused to support the war effort.
- Under the influence of Gandhi, organized non-violence was advocated as an alternative to war. The “Quit India” Resolution of August 1942 boldly reiterated the Congress demand for independence.
- With the release of most of its leaders early in 1945, the Congress resumed its demands for Indian independence. The INC Resolution of June 1945 declared:
 - (a) That world peace and any new international order can only be based on the recognition of the freedom of all countries;
 - (b) It further called for the elimination of all traces of imperialist control, by whatever name it may be called.
- While the Congress welcomed the formation of the United Nations, it expressed certain major points of dissatisfaction with the kind of organization that had been formed. A Resolution of the Congress Working Committee in July 1945 raised two major objections:

- (a) The first was against the dominant role of the great powers in the new organization to the extent that they are placed above and beyond the law they have themselves helped in framing, with the consequence that 'the position allotted to the smaller nations in the Charter is one lacking all effectiveness'.
 - (b) The second objection of the Congress was to the 'vague and unsatisfactory' declaration in the UN Charter regarding non-self-governing territories, instead of 'a full and frank recognition of national independence'.
- In subsequent Resolutions in 1945 and 1946, the Congress Working Committee voiced apprehensions regarding the consequences of the atomic bomb and the growing tensions in international relations, resulting in open recrimination between the great powers and attempts on their part to secure or hold on to colonial areas and vantage points and create satellite states. The Congress was especially concerned over the many evidences that the imperialist powers are again engaged in the old contest for dominion over others.
 - The Congress demanded the end of foreign domination over the countries of Asia and Africa, and it expressed its strong sympathy and support for the independence movements in Indonesia, Indo-China and elsewhere. It was particularly insistent on the early granting of independence for India. A Resolution of the Working Committee in March 1946 declared: India still remains the crux of the problem of Asian freedom. On the independence of India depends the freedom of many countries and the peace of the world.

By way of concluding this section, it may be stated that unlike other national movements, the Indian National Congress took an active interest in world affairs and gradually developed a foreign policy, which flowed from, and was complementary to, the Congress creed of obtaining swaraj by peaceful means. The essence of the Indian National Congress' approach to foreign policy may be summarized as follows:

1. The elimination of political and economic imperialism everywhere, and cooperation among nations on equal terms;
2. The right of self-determination for all oppressed nations of the world;

3. Peace and disarmament, Asian solidarity and world federation; and
4. A policy of non-alignment, so as to be insulated from the struggle of power blocs in the world.

It must also be stated that the eagerness of the Congress to voice the cause of the exploited nations of the world, won the sympathy of all freedom-loving people, and led to the creation of strong international opinion against colonialism, imperialism and racism.

Check Your Progress - 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Elaborate the position taken by the Indian National Congress on Foreign Policy issues prior to Independence.

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1.3 NEHRU'S ROLE IN LAYING THE FOUNDATION OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Few statesmen in the twentieth century, writes Michael Brecher, have attained the stature of Jawaharlal Nehru. As the pre-eminent figure in India's era of transition, he bears comparison with Roosevelt and Churchill, Lenin and Mao, men who towered above their colleagues and guided their peoples through a period of national crisis. C. Rajagopalachari, the last Governor-General of India said of Nehru: There is not anyone who would do as well in his place. Nehru's leadership left its impress both on domestic and on foreign policy.

When Jawaharlal Nehru formed the "Interim Government" in September 1946 and retained the Department of "Commonwealth Relations" under his own charge, or when a year later, in his first Cabinet, he assumed the External Affairs portfolio, no one was surprised.

For nearly twenty years, Nehru had been the mentor of Gandhi and the Indian National Congress on international affairs. Through study, travel and correspondence, he had kept in touch with the currents of world politics. At his instance, the Indian National Congress had denounced Nazism and Fascism in unmeasured terms. His sympathy with the victims of totalitarian aggression – Republican Spain, Czechoslovakia and China – had been unequivocally and forcefully expressed. He visited Barcelona when the fate of the Spanish Republic hung in the balance; he was in Prague when the shadow of Nazi occupation hovered over it; in September 1939, he was in Chungking on a goodwill mission when the Second World War broke out. Nehru made no secret of his opposition to the policy of “appeasement” of the dictators, nor of his suspicion that Anglo-French policy in those twilight years was directed less to checkmating Hitler and Mussolini, than to erecting a cordon sanitaire around Soviet Russia, a country for which, ever since his brief visit to Moscow in 1927, Nehru had entertained much admiration.

With his passionate hatred of colonialism and war, it is not surprising that the two most important planks in Nehru’s foreign policy, immediately after assuming office, should have been the liberation of countries under alien rule, and the promotion of peace among nations. These objectives stemmed from deeply held convictions of India’s first Prime Minister.

This optimism permeated Nehru’s first broadcast on the All-India Radio on 7th September, 1946, soon after he formed the “Interim Government”. In this, he spelt out his approach to foreign affairs:

“We propose as far as possible,” he said, “to keep away from the power politics of groups aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disaster on an even vaster scale.” He looked forward to a cordial and cooperative relationship with Britain and the countries of the Commonwealth, sympathised with Asian countries – such as Indonesia – which were struggling to free themselves from colonial domination. He sent his greetings to the people of the United States of America “to whom destiny has given a major role in international affairs”. He made a friendly reference to “that other great nation of the modern world, the Soviet Union ... They are our neighbours in Asia and we shall have to undertake many common tasks and have much to do with each other”. Of China, he spoke with special warmth: “That mighty country with a mighty past, our neighbour

has been our friend through the ages, and that friendship will endure and grow.”

This broadcast made by Nehru foreshadowed some of the fundamentals of Indian foreign policy for nearly two decades: Opposition to racialism and colonialism; willingness to heal the old quarrel with Britain; cooperation with the United States, the Soviet Union and China, and with countries of Afro-Asia on terms of equality, but without any entangling alliances.

Jawaharlal Nehru’s leadership left a deep impact on both domestic and foreign policy, with, however, one significant difference. In domestic policy, he built primarily on an existing framework; in foreign policy, he had to lay the foundations. Three of these were clearly the products of Nehru’s very creative mind, non-alignment, Panchsheel, and the continuation of India’s connection with the Commonwealth.

Non-alignment with power blocs is India’s distinctive contribution to international politics. Till 1947, it was normal for States to join the democratic bloc led by the USA, or the Communist bloc led by the USSR; this policy was in keeping with the balance-of-power system, then operational in world politics. Here, Nehru struck bold, new ground. To him, it appeared that a newly-independent State was likely to lose its independence of action, if it remained a camp-follower of the one or the other bloc. He also wanted to remain open to the help, which countries of both blocs might want to give, to promote the economic development of India. He also expounded with clarity and vigour that non-alignment was not the same thing as neutrality; it was not a negative policy but a positive one; and that it would contribute to peace. To the Indian people, he commended the policy, as it was in keeping with the Indian tradition of tolerance.

The second basic idea to which Jawaharlal Nehru was committed was Panchsheel, the five principles of peaceful co-existence. These principles, which first found mention in the India-China Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India (1954) were:

1. Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty;
2. Mutual non-aggression;
3. Mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs;
4. Equality and mutual benefit; and

5. Peaceful co-existence.

The essence of Panchsheel was, as Nehru explained in Parliament, that there may be different ways of progress, possibly different outlooks, but that broadly, the ultimate objectives are the same. It follows that each country should carve out its own destiny without interfering with others. Nehru even claimed that ever since these ideas of peaceful coexistence were initially promulgated, “not only have they spread in the world and influenced more and more countries, but they have acquired progressively a greater depth and a greater meaning too”.

The third aspect of foreign policy in which Nehru’s influence is clearly seen is India’s continued association with the Commonwealth of Nations – a decision that was ratified by the Constituent Assembly on 17th May 1949. The Prime Minister, as the representative of India, had agreed to the declaration on the continued membership of India in the Commonwealth of Nations at the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London on 19th April 1949. There were critics of this decision in the Constituent Assembly, and elsewhere. Answering them, Nehru pointed out that in agreeing to India’s continuance in the Commonwealth, they were not breaking any pledge they had taken in earlier years to achieve Purna Swaraj or complete independence; the Commonwealth did not take away an iota of Indian independence. Besides, it would be to India’s advantage to continue her association with a group of nations to further certain causes, like peace. Moreover, it was always open to India to leave the Commonwealth.

Closer Relations between India and Asia

Nehru also advocated closer relations between India and other Asian countries. At a Conference of Asian countries in Delhi from 23rd March to 2nd April 1947, attended by 28 countries, Nehru emphasized the following:

- In this crisis of world history, Asia will necessarily play a vital role;
- Asian countries can no longer be used as pawns by other countries;
- They are entitled to prosecute their own policies in world affairs.
- We have arrived at a stage in human affairs when the ideal of One World and some kind of World Federation seems to be essential, though there are many dangers and obstacles in the way ...

Gandhi, Nehru and India's Foreign Policy

Probably the most fundamental aspect of Gandhian thought that Nehru applied to foreign policy, is the Gandhian theory of means and ends. According to this theory, the means to an end are equally as important as, and more often more important than, the end itself. Throughout his teachings, Gandhi insisted that unless great attention is paid to the proper methods of attaining one's goal, the goal might not be reached; or even if it is reached, the goal will be found worthless if the methods used have created more problems. The means to an end, therefore, must be the kind that will resolve conflicts, not arouse them. They must be means that in the end will produce a solution that is to the advantage of all parties. As Nehru has translated it, "Every action has naturally a result. Every right action must have, to that extent, a right result ... somewhere, every wrong action must have a wrong result."

Yet another of Gandhi's ideas – the idea of non-violence – was not accepted by Nehru to the degree advocated by Gandhi, though he believed that it should be applied to most situations in international relations. The idea requires that everything that is done to win an opponent to a point of view must avoid harm, and since violence invariably causes harm, it must be eschewed at all costs. To Gandhi, non-violence forbade hatred but even evil thoughts, ill will, resentment and undue haste. The goal must be to persuade one's opponent that your solution is to his advantage. Thus, the Indian independence movement had to be carried on in a manner that would not leave any residue of ill-will between the British and the Indians and in a manner in which the British could eventually be brought to agree that India's independence would be in the best interests of Britain, as well as in the best interests of India and the world. Causing an opponent to lose face or suffer embarrassment is forbidden, for that is likely to leave a residue of resentment and perhaps a desire for revenge that will be the source of later trouble, and if that happens, the dispute has not been settled completely and finally.

Nehru emphasized this point in 1953, when he declared that the objective of both India and Pakistan in finding a way out of their conflicts should be "to deter causing injury to the feelings of the other side and to create amicable conditions, promote goodwill and discourage ill-will". Nehru acknowledged that he learnt from Gandhi the following: Always to leave the door open during conflicts; always to maintain channels of communication or connecting links among the conflicting parties. He learned that he must stick to his principles,

to what he believed to be the truth, but always to remain friendly to and ready to talk with an opponent. It was especially Gandhi's friendly approach to his opponents that struck Nehru. Gandhi literally undermined his opposition, Nehru has emphasized, by being friendly – by his psychological approach – and repeatedly, his opponent's hostility and aggressiveness “just faded away”.

Nehru appeared to be attempting to apply some of Gandhi's fundamental rules to international relations. In her *Conquest of Violence*, Joan Bondurant lists nine fundamental rules governing Gandhi's Satyagraha campaigns, of which five were sought to be adapted by Nehru to foreign affairs. They are:

1. Self-reliance at all times;
2. Reduction of demands to a minimum consistent with truth;
3. Persistent search for avenues of cooperation with the adversary, on honourable terms;
4. Refusal to surrender essentials in negotiations; and
5. Insistence upon full agreement on fundamentals, before accepting a settlement.

By the time, Nehru took over the reigns of India's foreign policy after the Second World War, he no longer seemed to doubt the possibility of applying Gandhian teachings to the affairs of nations. He was aware that the Indian struggle with Great Britain had been unique in history, in that friendly relations had followed it. But it had proved, he added, that physical force is not necessary as an arbiter of man's destiny; and it had proved further that the methods used to attain a goal are of paramount importance. When later on, France restored Pondicherry to India after peaceful negotiation, Nehru pointed to the agreement as an example of “friendly solutions by negotiated settlement” and proclaimed it as a “triumph” for international goodwill. Nehru also insisted that the Gandhian technique had proved that politics can be kept ethical and idealistic; that in fact, moral forces such as justice cannot be ignored in politics without peril.

Check Your Progress - 2

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Describe Jawaharlal Nehru’s role in laying the foundation of India’s Foreign Policy.

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1.4 LET US SUM UP

- India’s foreign policy had been well-conceptualized and thought out, even before she attained independence. Several of India’s post-Independence preoccupations – be it anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, non-alignment or peace and disarmament – were pre-figured in the vital positions taken by the Indian National Congress, prior to Independence.
- If there was one man who played a pioneering role in laying the foundations of India’s foreign policy, it was Jawaharlal Nehru. Some of these fundamentals were – opposition to racialism and colonialism, continuation of India’s connection with the Commonwealth, cooperation with the USA, USSR and China, and with countries of Afro-Asia on terms of equality, but without any entangling alliances, and an emphasis on peace and disarmament.
- Non-alignment and Panch Sheel are two very creative innovations in India’s foreign policy. Non-alignment provided vital space to Third World countries to steer clear of Cold War politics, while remaining friendly with both Super Powers. The essence of Panch Sheel was the inculcation of model bilateral codes of conduct between neighbouring countries, notwithstanding differing outlooks and ideologies.
- Gandhian values frequently surface in India’s foreign policy, most notably the emphasis on the right means to achieve one’s ends, non-violence and the conviction that all politics is ultimately the pursuit of justice.

1.5 SOME KEY WORDS

- Imperialism : Aggrandisement
- Power Blocks : Group of Nations representing different ideology.
- Appeasement : Pleasing
- Commonwealth : Association of Nations which were the colonies of Britain.

1.6 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

- Willard Range, : Jawaharlal Nehru's World View – A Theory of International Relations, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1961).
- K.P. Misra, : ed., Studies in Indian Foreign Policy, (Delhi, Vikas Publications, 1969).
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1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check your progress - 1

1. See Sections 1.2

Check your progress - 2

1. See Sections 1.3

Unit-2 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Basic Principles of India's Foreign Policy
 - 2.2.1 The Middle Path
 - 2.2.2 Non-Alignment
 - 2.2.3 International Peace and Disarmament
 - 2.2.4 Opposition to Pacts and Alliances
 - 2.2.5 Reconciliation of Idealism with Realism
 - 2.2.6 Liberal Internationalism
 - 2.2.7 Universalism and Multilateralism
 - 2.2.8 Gandhism
- 2.3 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.4 Key Words
- 2.5 Some Useful Books
- 2.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

2.0 Objectives

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the rich values that give a distinctive character to India's foreign policy;
- Appreciate the role of as many as eight basic principles in the moulding and shaping of India's foreign policy;
- Draw inferences on the continued relevance of these principles in guiding India's foreign policy in the 21st century.

2.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of any country's foreign policy is the promotion of its national interest – to ensure its security, safeguard its sovereignty, contribute to its growth and prosperity, and generally enhance its stature, influence and role in the comity of nations. But there is also a broader purpose behind foreign policy – the promotion of peace, disarmament and development, and the establishment of a stable, fair and equitable global order. In the conceptualization and implementation of India's foreign policy, both these purposes have been inextricably interwoven.

India's foreign policy is inspired by the ideals and vision of the leaders of our freedom struggle. As shaped and articulated by our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, it reflects the finest elements of our cultural and philosophical heritage. Its essential principles are embodied in the Constitution itself. According to Article 51, the State shall endeavour to promote international peace and security; maintain just and honourable relations among nations; foster respect for international law and treaty obligations; and encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration.

Nehru propounded five principles of co-existence, in the Preamble to the Sino-Agreement on Trade with Tibet, on 29th April 1954. The Panch Sheel, which Nehru described as India's answer to the doctrine of security pacts, listed five norms of international behaviour:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
2. Non-aggression;

3. Non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
4. Equality and mutual advantage; and
5. Peaceful co-existence and economic cooperation.

The sheet anchor of India's foreign policy was – and is – non-alignment. The concept attempts a harmonious blend of negative as well as positive elements. The negative element envisages a course of refusal to take sides in any military line-up of world powers. This is perhaps the hardcore or the irreducible minimum of non-alignment. It meant keeping away not just from the Cold War, but also from ideological crusades, military blocs and the arms race. It is this negative element of non-alignment, unduly emphasized by the West, which led scholars to misunderstand non-alignment for neutrality and neutralism.

But the nature of non-alignment is different. It has no legal foundations, as neutrality in the Swiss and Austrian context implies. Its basis is political. In its positive sense, non-alignment stands for retention of individual identities, independent judgment, influence politics as against power politics, peace and disarmament, and cooperation for economic development. When viewed from this perspective, non-alignment has been, and will continue to be, the sheet anchor of India's foreign policy.

To summarize, the strength and sustenance of India's foreign policy has been derived from the ideals of our freedom struggle, our cultural and philosophical heritage, our Constitutional principles, Panch Sheel and non-alignment.

2.2 Basic Principles of India's Foreign Policy

2.2.1 The Middle Path

In the words of Nalini Kant Jha, "A preference for the middle path is the hallmark of Indian tradition and culture, as seen in the Sanskrit saying, *ati sarvatra varjayet*, meaning, "Let us eschew excess at all times". This saying underlines India's philosophical abhorrence of absolutes, of extremes, of the tendency to see things strictly in terms of black and white. It runs like an unbroken thread through Indian culture."

According to Michael Brecher, "The central message of India's philosophical tradition, dating from the Buddha, has revolved round the rejection of absolutes and extreme positions.

On the contrary, it has stressed philosophical relativity, intellectual Catholicism and co-existence of good and evil; in short, the golden middle path of compromises and tolerance of opposites”.

Nehru echoed the same sentiment when he said, “India has absorbed and harmonized different religions, and even the conflict between science and religion in the past; and maybe it is our destiny to help reconcile the conflicting ideologies of today”.

In view of such a cultural-philosophical tradition, and its reflection in the personality of Jawaharlal Nehru, the chief architect of independent India’s foreign and domestic policies, it was but natural that India preferred the ‘golden mean’ between the two competing international ideologies of the day – Western liberal democracy and Soviet egalitarianism. The logic has been well brought by K. Shridharani:

With the West, India shared such values as dignity of the individual and sanctity of civil liberties, democratic political institutions, the Rule of Law, the importance of religion even in a secular State, respect for the scientific approach, and modern technology. At the same time, it was repelled by what it considered as the West’s ‘hysteria’ about Communism, its ‘pactomania’, and its strategy not only to contain Communism but also to combat what it termed neutralism. It appreciated the Soviet stand against colonialism and racialism, as also its Asia-mindedness. It was, at the same time, repelled by the Soviet submerging of the individual in the name of the State. It, therefore, refused to align itself with any particular bloc and resolved to cooperate with both the blocs in furtherance of its own ideals.

In Nehru’s own words:

We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups aligned against one another. The world, in spite of its rivalries and hatreds and inner conflicts, moves inevitably towards closer cooperation and the building up of a world commonwealth. It is for this one world that a free India will work ... We send our greetings to the people of the United States, to whom destiny has given a major role in international affairs ... To that other great nation of the modern world, the Soviet Union, which also carries a vast responsibility for shaping world events, we send greetings.

This was the message of friendship towards all that India issued, in 1946. This policy gave India freedom of maneuver in a world, which was getting frozen in its divisions. Further,

it helped India to act as a bridge between the two Power blocs, thus gaining tremendously in terms of prestige and status.

This ancient diplomatic tradition, together with the philosophic tradition of “welfare of all”, did not, however, allow Indian policy to become neutral. On the contrary, it was a dynamic one, concerned with the freedom and welfare of people all over the world. This is why Non-alignment is, in Nehru’s words, “a positive concept with an implicit philosophy behind it; its roots go back to the time of Asoka and earlier”. The major component of that philosophy is “our desire to evolve a pragmatic synthesis of different philosophies and economic solutions and to find out some new way, a middle or third way, of harmonizing ... these two so-called irreconcilable ideologies of Capitalism and Communism at domestic and international levels”. (R.K. Karnajia).

2.2.2 Non-Alignment

Even before attaining Independence, India had become “a symbol and catalyst of self-determination” for most nationalist movements in Asia and Africa. Its history, geography, national interest and leadership contrived to produce a certain policy in external affairs, which came to be known as Non-Alignment. Two major factors were responsible for the emergence of non-alignment as a basic factor in India’s foreign policy:

1. A strong desire to save India from being entangled in the Cold War and the imperialist designs of the Big Powers; and
2. An urge to play a major role in world affairs.

The non-availability of the opportunity to play such a role under foreign rule naturally whetted this urge. The dual urge was strengthened by Gandhi’s teaching, that free India would have a certain image in the world – the mission of working for peace and friendship among the different nations.

The concept of Non-Alignment may be said to attempt a harmonious blend of negative as well as positive elements. The so-called negative element envisages a course of refusal to take sides in any military line-up of world powers. This is perhaps the hardcore or the irreducible minimum of non-alignment. This has been well brought out in Jawaharlal Nehru’s first formal enunciation of the policy: We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the

power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars, and which may again lead to disasters on an even wider scale.

Nehru's reasons for opposing India's alignment with either of the Super Powers are several:

1. In the first place, non-alignment might make it possible for India to remain outside the mainstream of big-power rivalry. Although quite conscious of the interdependence of all States, Nehru felt that there are varying degrees of interdependence and involvement, and that it is within the power of nations, favourably situated geographically, to avoid the inner currents of big-power hatred, jealousy and maneuvering. Thus, staying outside power blocs was a "natural policy" for a State that had recently attained her freedom.
2. A closely related reason for non-alignment is that such a policy might make it possible for India to avoid being drawn into, what Nehru referred to many times as Europe's "legacy of conflict". Although Nehru was aware that power politics is a universal phenomenon, he was convinced that only in Europe had power politics been elevated into a political way of life, supported by elaborate theories to justify it; and the result is that although all States occasionally have quarrels with their neighbours, there is nowhere else anything like the historical habit of conflict that has persisted in Europe. Nehru felt that Asian States like India are only secondarily affected by European power politics, and should remain out of its purview, as much as possible. The major problems of India, and all other Asian States, are about food, clothing, health, education, housing and so on, and attention to such problems is bound to suffer, if Asian nations become entangled in the European whirlpool.
3. Nehru defended the policy of non-alignment also on the grounds of opportunism, holding that to tie a State to a bloc deprives it of freedom of maneuver, deprives it of freedom to decide future issues on the grounds of national interest and to side with whichever State or States, the best interests of the nation, demand. Even siding with an imperialist power on some future issue might, under the circumstances, be the lesser of two evils, Nehru claimed; he wanted India to remain in a position to do whatever was most opportune. Alignment with a particular bloc, moreover, obliged a State to "put all its eggs in one basket", which was a risky venture. Nehru also stated that India disagreed with the views of both Super Powers on too many vital issues to allow honest alignment

with either of them.

4. Nehru further argued that India's alignment with a bloc would not help either India or the bloc. He felt that minor powers had aligned themselves with the Super Powers in the Cold War, not because their vital national interest required alignment, but largely to gain the favour of the Super Powers, "in the hope that some crumbs might fall from their table". And India is not interested in a few crumbs! Nor did Nehru think that minor allies are of much value to the Super Powers. Rather they are burdens on the great powers. The great powers must protect and arm their minor allies, and even if the minor ally provides military bases a few hundred miles closer to the Super Power's adversary, the bases are difficult to defend; moreover, their value in a day of long-range weapons is questionable.

Nehru argued that if it is protection against invasion that the Super Powers have to offer their minor allies, India could provide her own protection. Nehru had the utmost confidence in the ability of India to defend herself within her own borders. Even though other States may be more powerful militarily, India has at least enough power to make a potential invader think twice as to whether or not an invasion would be worthwhile.

5. Nehru defended his non-alignment policy also on the ground that it is only by means of such a policy that is possible for India to influence other States, especially her neighbours. So long as she remains unaligned, India can maintain a position of disinterestedness; she can assess issues on their merits; she can preserve her individuality; she can remain free of suspicion that she is an accomplice; she can serve as a conciliator and exert influence. But the moment she becomes aligned, she will lose all of those advantages, and her influence will disappear. So it is best for the whole world, Nehru explained, that India stay out of blocs, because the need of disinterested conciliators and non-partisan influences is desperate.
6. A final Nehruvian argument in favour of remaining outside the Cold War blocs is that none of the great powers of recent times has had foreign policies worth following; none has had foreign policies that can be deemed successful according to Nehru's criteria of success. To Nehru, a successful foreign policy has been one that succeeded

in moving the world towards peace. Its major objective must be peace. But it is patent that peace has been only a secondary objective of the major powers since the Second World War. The Soviet Union's chief goal appears to have been the expansion of Communism and Soviet power. The paramount ends of Great Britain and France have been to hang on to their positions of power and prestige.

Nehru made it clear on several occasions that peace is the critical need of India, as well as of other similarly under-developed States, and a bloc of powers that does not have peace as the supreme objective of its foreign policy, is not worthy to be followed.

Non-alignment thus meant keeping away from:

- (a) The Cold War;
- (b) Ideological crusades;
- (c) The arms race; and
- (d) Military blocs.

It is this negative element of non-alignment, unduly emphasized by the West that has driven many of their scholars to use the terms neutrality and neutralism for non-alignment. However, it must be realized that the status of neutrality, as followed by Switzerland and Austria, for instance, is quite different. This neutrality is based on a legal foundation. But the nature of the commitment of non-alignment is different. It has no such legal foundations. Its basis is political; it can change, and in fact, has changed.

Distinctive Features of Non-Alignment

1. Rejection of Military and Bloc Alignments;
2. Retention of Individual Identities;
3. Maintenance of Independent Judgment;
4. Pursuance of Influence Politics.

1. Rejection of Military and Bloc Alignments

Speaking about the various military alliances dividing the world, Jawaharlal Nehru said:

I think the policy of military alliances and the Cold War has not brought any results to the world ... In the last few years, the spread of this policy to Asia has not added to the security of the world or to any country's security. It has deviated people from thinking on economic progress and developing inner strength, and in turn tried to bolster up countries by military alliances by military means, which can only be temporary. It has really come in the way of progress.

We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from power politics of groups aligned with one another, which have led in the past to world wars, and which may lead to disasters on an even greater scale.

This explains why the concept of non-alignment, envisaged non-participation in the Cold War, and the rejection of military and bloc alignments. Nehru was very particular that non-aligned countries should constitute themselves as (i) "bridges of understanding"; and (ii) channels of communication, between the two blocs. It was his hope that eventually, the non-aligned countries would be able to persuade the two Super Powers to avoid disaster (nuclear war) by adopting the policies of peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

While India's foreign policy was indeed able to successfully steer clear of military and bloc alignments, it is debatable whether it succeeded in its non-aligned objective of serving as "bridges of understanding" and "channels of communication" between the two blocs.

2. Retention of Individual Identities

New States saw in non-alignment a means of retaining their individual distinctive ideological identities, especially in the context of the ideological conflict between the two blocs. They desired to retain the individuality of their political, economic, social and cultural institutions – rather than be carbon copies of other big States.

In this connection, the words of Lal Bahadur Shastri, when he was Prime Minister of India, deserve recollection:

We are not copies of Europeans, Americans or Russians. We are Asians and Africans. It would not be creditable for our dignity and new freedom, if we were camp followers of America or any other country of Europe.

It must be acknowledged that non-alignment gave to countries, individually and collectively, a status and prestige that small States had never enjoyed before the Second World War, in an environment that was dominated by the big powers. India, as one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement, was definitely able to retain its individual distinctive identity, in the formulation and implementation of its foreign policy.

3. Maintenance of Individual Judgment

Non-alignment envisages independence of judgment – on events and problems as they arise in international politics, according to the merits of each case – instead of pre-judging them on the basis of ideological and other affinities or differences. In Jawaharlal Nehru's words, the policy of non-alignment itself can only be a policy of acting according to our best judgment.

Independent judgment implies:

- The freedom to determine one's national policies and to formulate one's own concepts, unhampered and unhindered by pressures or intervention from outside;
- The freedom to conduct one's political, economic and social affairs in line with one's own national interest;
- The freedom to cooperate with all nations, and to be friends with all nations; and
- The freedom to oppose anything which harms the rightful and just interests of any nation.

There is no doubt that India's foreign policy clearly exhibited 'independent judgment', as elaborated above.

4. Pursuance of Influence Politics

The policy of non-alignment does not contemplate a third bloc. Jawaharlal Nehru was entirely in agreement with President Tito of Yugoslavia when he asked:

Would it be logical for us, who are fighting against division of the world into blocs, to create a third bloc? Would this contribute towards the relaxation of tension in the world? Of course not! We cannot pursue such aims as they would run counter to the very political concept of the non-aligned.

Non-alignment, in theory, rejects power politics as the over-riding consideration in international politics. Non-aligned States are not involved in the struggle for power, which seeks, as Hans Morgenthau said, “man’s control over the minds and actions of other men”.

Instead, non-aligned States like India may be said to have attempted “influence politics”. Influence politics aims at getting others to do what one wants, but unlike the former, the latter tries to attain this objective through persuasion.

Check Your Progress - 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain Jawaharlal Nehru’s reasons for opposing India’s alignment with either of the Super Powers.

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1. What are the distinctive features of Non-Alignment? Explain.

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2.2.3 International Peace and Disarmament

India's foreign policy has traditionally believed in international peace and disarmament. Jawaharlal Nehru was opposed to attempts to solve international problems by military means: "it is an evil method that produces only evil results". Neither war nor the threat of war will produce the kind of world most mean want, he insisted; he was convinced that the military methods has never yet solved a major world problem. Even military defence against defenders, as necessary and justifiable as it might be, brings in its wake a host of new problems and produces the risk that even the defenders will ultimately develop a military outlook. This is precisely what happened in the Korean War of the early 1950s. The United Nations was justified, he thought, in defending South Korea and pushing back the North Korean invaders into their own territory above the 38th Parallel. At that point, the fighting should have been stopped, and the remaining problems settled by negotiation. The tragedy was that military thinking had assumed control. It was decided therefore, that the unification of all Korea – the major remaining problem – could best be achieved by the military method.

Nehru confessed that his belief, that war and other military methods are not suitable to the handling of many problems, has been influenced largely by India's success in the use of non-violent methods. He thought, moreover, that the increased emphasis by the West on military methods since the Second World War is due, in part, to fear that any other method will be equivalent to appeasement or surrender to an opponent's ideology. But the military approach to problems has too many weaknesses to be used for any purpose but self-defence. In the first place, it produces a vicious circle, for its application by one party in a dispute automatically provokes the other party to use it also – and here you have the cause of the armaments race. Also, war is too destructive, particularly in the Nuclear Age. Like so many others, Nehru predicted that if there were a nuclear war, it would result in the complete destruction of civilization.

Nehru objected also to the use of war in settling disputes, because it is so hard to control. Although wars are fought to attain certain objectives, too often those objectives are lost sight of, as the conflict progresses and human passions intensify; and when the war is over, it is discovered too late that the objectives have not been attained at all. This is more likely to happen in the Nuclear Age, when whole nations can be obliterated. Worst of all, the

application of the military approach to problems creates an undesirable psychological climate, a climate of opinion that puts emphasis on preparations for war. This gets in the way of calm, deliberate and frank negotiation and conciliation.

2.2.4 Opposition to Pacts and Alliances

Jawaharlal Nehru was firmly against States forming pacts and alliances, labeling it as a wrong approach to international problems. While agreeing that (a) there are occasional circumstances in which a State's security is clearly threatened that there is justification in seeking an ally; and (b) in wartime, alliances are both essential and probably inevitable, in peacetime, most alliances have proved, he believed, to be either worthless or downright harmful. The following are Nehru's objections to pacts and alliances in international politics, which have since become a basic principle of India's foreign policy:

- A major problem with pacts and alliances is that they are generally organized against some particular enemy or potential enemy, and their very creation automatically declares that a particular State is an enemy. This automatically promotes a hostile atmosphere.
- Another major objection is that pacts and alliances do little or nothing to cure the disease that produced the original hostility. Nehru noted in the early 1930s, for example, that all the post-First World War pacts such as the Washington Naval Agreement, the Locarno Pact, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and the Anglo-French Naval Agreement were "desperate attempts to steady a quarrelsome and collapsing world, as if such pacts or patchwork on the surface could remedy a deep-seated disease". The deep-seated disease to him, at that time, was the struggle for power that was going on between the "satisfied Powers and the unsatisfied Powers", and he could not see how the pacts could do any good in resolving that struggle, for they were designed to freeze the status quo, rather than bring about a distribution of the world's goods and power that would be acceptable to all.

A generation later, Nehru was opposing the Baghdad Pact on much the same grounds that its objectives could not be achieved. The Baghdad Pact, he claimed, had been designed to keep Russia out of the Middle East. In reality, it had produced the opposite result, provoking Russia into taking more interest in the Middle East than

ever before.

- Yet another objection of Nehru to pacts and alliances is that they often create hostile divisions among hitherto friendly States. The mere joining of an alliance by one State often causes neighbouring States to suspect that the alliance might be turned against them. The South-East Asia Treaty Organization, for example, to which some States of South-East Asia adhered while others did not, disturbed the stability and friendly atmosphere of the whole region. The Baghdad Pact also caused hostile divisions throughout the Middle East.
- A further objection to alliances is that they increase the danger of local wars expanding into world wars, for the obligation of each signatory to come to the other's aid, draws States into a conflict often far removed from a merely local dispute that should be restricted to local limits.
- Nehru also seemed to feel that alliances contain tendencies to develop in directions that they were not originally intended to go; and further, that some of these directions might not be desirable. Although the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the South-East Asia Treaty Organization and the United States-Pakistan alliance were designed, for example, to stem the post-Second World War tide of Communism, Nehru long harboured a suspicion that the agreements might someday be interpreted to strengthen or re-introduce colonialism in Asia and Africa. NATO, in particular, seemed to contain the seed of the idea that European colonial powers might someday invoke the treaty to attain NATO intervention, on behalf of its members' efforts to hold on to their Afro-Asian possessions and thus perpetuates the hated and out-worn institution of imperialism. NATO had degenerated, Nehru declared in 1952, from a defensive alliance into a pact, for the defence of colonialism.
- Alliances and pacts are also flimsy and ephemeral things, in Nehru's view, which promise security for hardly more than a day. This is due to the fact that the members of alliances, especially the Great Powers, are in the habit of constantly shifting their allegiances from one side to the other. They are allies one day and enemies the next, or enemies one day and allies the next. Hitler and Stalin were enemies one day, for example; then in 1939 they became allies; and finally, in mid-1941, they became

enemies again. This had been going on throughout the history of international relations; and it scarcely justifies States putting more than a thimbleful of confidence in the scraps of paper so solemnly signed.

- Nehru opposed some of the pacts and alliances signed since the Second World War not only on principle but on grounds of Indian national interests as well. Since all the major alliances of the period were part and parcel of the Cold War, Nehru turned hostile to them automatically, whenever a neighbour became involved in any of them. Nehru was convinced that such involvement by a neighbour in the Cold War would bring the war too close to India and disturb the “area of peace” which he had dreamed of building among the non-aligned States in the area.

Check Your Progress -2

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. What were Jawaharlal Nehru’s objections to pacts and alliances? Explain.

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2.2.5 Reconciliation of Idealism with Realism

It was Mahatma Gandhi who revolutionized the ideal of non-violence by demonstrating, first in South Africa and later in India, that it could be employed as a weapon to achieve socio-political ends. Gandhi wanted to use non-violence in international relations as well. In his view, the acceptance of non-violence was the only way to ensure security in the atomic age. To quote Gandhi, “One thing is certain. If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in history.” Clearly, India’s crusade against the arms race and its efforts to promote disarmament derive from this tradition of non-violence.

The application of non-violence to India's foreign relations meant a deliberate acceptance of a method or approach to foreign policy problems which emphasizes the temper of peace. This was clearly reflected in India's decision to remain a member of the Commonwealth of Nations after Independence. Justifying this decision of his, Jawaharlal Nehru stated in the Rajya Sabha, "Our approach is not to stress the differences, but to stress the similarities."

This method, however, had its limitations, as India discovered to its cost during the action in Goa in 1961, the Chinese invasion in 1962 and the Pakistani aggressions in 1948, 1965, 1971 and more recently, in Kargil. India attempted the peaceful method of negotiation in each case. From its failure to prevent war, it learnt that the reality of power should be taken into account, along with the non-violent approach to difficult international problems, if the security of the country is to be ensured.

In summing up the application of the ideal of non-violence to India's foreign relations, Nehru stated "he drew his inspiration from Gandhi". However, he also stated that he followed the Master only as far as was practicable.

Apart from non-violence, there is the idealist view that the means to be employed to achieve an end, are as important as the end itself, and that both should be in accordance with moral law. Although Nehru was aware of the basic Indian tradition and the Gandhian position about the means being as important as the end itself, he frankly admitted that moral principles were relevant to statecraft, only up to a point.

As N.K. Jha points out, India's action in Goa in 1961 is a clear example of Nehru's willingness to equate ends and means only up to a point, and no more. After gaining independence from British rule in 1947, the people of India turned to the question of liberating areas that were then under French and Portuguese rule. Until 16th August 1961, however, the use of exclusively peaceful means to achieve the national interest was one of the cornerstones of India's foreign policy. In June 1955, Nehru declared at a public meeting at Poona, "we will never resort to police or military action to secure the merger of Goa and other Portuguese settlements". Nehru wanted to reaffirm his adherence to traditional international law, which ruled out the use of force even to liberate territories illegally held by imperialist powers.

India tried valiantly to negotiate with Portugal directly, as well as indirectly through countries like Britain. It was only when it became clear that Portugal was not willing to see reason that India was constrained to use force on 18th December 1961, to integrate Goa into India. Nehru justified the action, stating that a dead end had been reached in India's negotiations with Portugal. Finally, India had to choose the lesser evil of using force, as against the greater one of letting colonialism flourish inside its territory. India's action in Goa in 1961 may therefore be regarded as a reflection of realism in Nehru's foreign policy.

This realistic trend in India's foreign policy was strengthened after the Chinese aggression of 1962. Nehru himself admitted later: "In the past, our preoccupation with the human problems of poverty and illiteracy was such that we were content to assign a relatively low priority to defence requirements in the conventional sense..." Since the Chinese aggression of 1962, it is a fact that India's foreign policy has been less doctrinaire and more realistic, despite the continuance of its broad idealistic moorings.

2.2.6 Liberal Internationalism

Liberal Internationalism is embodied in Article 51 of the Indian Constitution, in the section on Directive Principles of State Policy. It reads as follows:

...To promote international peace and security; maintain just and honourable relations between nations; foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another; and encourage the settlement of international disputes by arbitration.

Liberal Internationalism drew inspiration from pre-Independence nationalist leaders like N.G. Ranade and Surendranath Banerjee, who used ethical, legal and economic ideas to produce reforms in imperial structures. Liberal Internationalism believes in progressive nationalism, equal relations between States and the elimination of domestic and systemic injustices.

2.2.7 Universalism and Multilateralism

One of the basic principles of India's foreign policy is support for the United Nations as a universal and multilateral institution. India supports the United Nations because it shares similar universal principles. To India, the United Nations is the most important global institution

in existence. It offers the real future for humanity and remains the major international organization for resolving conflict and addressing global issues.

It may be recalled that India was one of the 51 founder-members of the United Nations and has been totally committed to it, ever since. This has been “a historic commitment, a political commitment, but above all, an emotional commitment, which has resulted in India playing a leading role in all the deliberations and activities of the organization”. (M.J. Priestly). India’s support to the world body is unique, in at least four significant ways:

- Her contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security;
- Her unique record of supporting UN activities and measures against colonialism and apartheid;
- Her unwavering commitment to the cause of multilateralism; and
- Her rich contribution to the debates on disarmament, development and human rights.

India shares the conventional wisdom that the UN is an international organization, and not a world federation. Membership of the UN is based on “sovereign equality” of States. Article 2, Para 7 of the UN Charter provides for the protection of the “domestic jurisdiction” of member-states, except under certain contingencies. India realizes and acknowledges the need to supplement the sovereign-state system with an international organization. At the same time, India is insistent that international organization cannot, as yet, supplant the state system and the prevailing nature and pattern of international relations.

For India and the Third World, the global transition that is currently taking place, and the inadequate response of the United Nations to it, provides a major challenge in international politics. A more orderly world, with the United Nations working to eliminate conflict and tension, seeking to build confidence, with an ability to make peace and keep that peace – is very desirable. That the organization should also move purposefully in its economic and social agenda is an equally important objective. However, this cannot be achieved as long as the organization is dominated by a small group of powers, constantly seeking to assert their own value judgments on the rest of the world.

Clearly, the time is ripe for the democratization of the UN. India, which has a distinctive place in international politics by virtue of its size, historical experience, diversity of contacts

with different parts of the world, and the extent of its international experience – has taken a clear position in this regard. This position, according to the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India, revolves around three issues:

1. The actions of the UN Security Council should not impinge upon national sovereignty, in the name of peacekeeping activities or human rights enforcement;
2. Security Council decisions should reflect General Assembly consensus. As of now, the ten elected Non-Permanent Members are far more representative than the five Permanent ones, so extending democracy with the Security Council has to entail expansion of Non-Permanent membership.
3. The Security Council should be answerable to the General Assembly.

Considering how complicated the procedures for amending the UN Charter is, and also how stubborn the Big Five are to any suggestion of change, some very creative initiatives would have to be taken by India towards democratization of the United Nations.

2.2.8 Gandhism

Probably, the most fundamental aspect of Gandhian thought that India has tried to apply to foreign policy is the Gandhian theory of means and ends. According to this theory, the means to an end are equally as important as, and more often more important than, the end itself. Throughout his teachings, Gandhi insisted that unless great attention is paid to the proper methods of attaining one's goal, the goal might not be reached; or even if it is reached, the goal will be found worthless, if the methods used have created additional problems. The means to an end, therefore, must be the kind that will resolve conflicts, not arouse them. They must be means that in the end will produce a solution that is to the advantage of all parties.

A corollary of this thesis is that the moral and psychological nature of the means determines the moral and psychological nature of the ends achieved. Thus evil means produce only evil results. Hate produces hate; violence produces more violence; ill will evokes ill will; dishonesty promotes dishonesty; and so on. In like manner, "only out of goodwill will you get goodwill"; a friendly approach will eventually evoke a friendly response; only peaceful methods will produce peace. Thus, if a State approaches another State, "in a friendly way,

with goodwill and generosity, you would be paid back in the same coin”, and probably in larger measure.

The Gandhian idea of Truth also looms large in India’s foreign policy. Gandhi taught that all men should be engaged continuously in a search for absolute Truth; and although absolute Truth will never be found, it should be pursued relentlessly. Each individual must determine what the Truth is. But individuals differ; and it is essential, therefore, for everyone to feel that his opponent might be closer to the Truth than he is; that his opponent’s views might be right and his wrong. In every pursuit of the Truth, therefore, every party must be completely honest and frank.

This brings us to another Gandhian idea – the idea of non-violence, which India believes can be applied to most situations in international relations. The idea requires that everything that is done to win an opponent to a point of view must avoid harm, and since violence invariably causes harm, it must be eschewed at all costs. To Gandhi, non-violence forbade not only hatred but also ill will. The goal must be to persuade one’s opponent that your solution is to his advantage. Thus, the Indian independence movement had to be carried on in a manner that would not leave any residue of ill will between the British and the Indians, and in a manner in which the British could eventually be brought to agree that India’s independence could be in the best interests of Britain as well as in the best interests of India and the world. Causing an opponent to lose face or suffer embarrassment is forbidden, for that is likely to leave a residue of resentment and perhaps a desire for revenge that will be the source of later trouble, and if that happens, the dispute has not been settled completely and finally.

Gandhi’s advice to leaders was always to leave the door open during conflicts, and always to maintain channels of communication or connecting links among the conflicting parties. While sticking to principles, States must be ready to talk with opponents. In such a friendly psychological atmosphere, reason would replace hostility and emotion.

In her *Conquest of Violence*, Joan Bondurant lists five fundamental rules governing Gandhi’s Satyagraha campaigns, as are applicable to India’s foreign policy:

1. Self-reliance at all times;

2. Reduction of demands to a minimum, consistent with Truth;
3. Persistent search for avenues of cooperation with the adversary, on honourable terms;
4. Refusal to surrender essentials in negotiations; and
5. Insistence upon full agreement on fundamentals, before accepting a settlement.

As the chief architect of India's foreign policy, Jawaharlal Nehru never doubted the possibility of applying the Gandhian teachings to the affairs of nations. Nehruvian foreign policy revealed that politics can be kept idealistic and ethical, and that moral forces such as justice cannot be ignored in politics without peril. Thus Nehru accepted the basic principles of Gandhism as universally applicable to bilateral relations in foreign policy.

Check Your Progress - 3

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Does Gandhism figure as a principle of India's foreign policy? If so, bring out some of the core ideas in Gandhian thought that are applicable to foreign policy.

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2.3 Let us Sum Up

- In the conceptualization and implementation of India's foreign policy, two purposes are clearly visible: a primary purpose and a broader purpose. The primary purpose is the promotion of its national interest – to ensure its security, safeguard its sovereignty, contribute to its growth and prosperity, and generally enhance its stature, influence and role in the comity of nations. The broader purpose is the promotion of peace, disarmament and development, and the establishment of a stable, fair and equitable global order.

- The basic principles of India's foreign policy are eight in number:
 1. The Middle Path;
 2. Non-Alignment;
 3. International Peace and Disarmament;
 4. Opposition to Pacts and Alliances;
 5. Reconciliation of Idealism with Realism;
 6. Liberal Internationalism;
 7. Universalism and Multilateralism; and
 8. Gandhism.
- The strength and sustenance of India's foreign policy has been derived from the ideals of our freedom struggle, our cultural and philosophical heritage, our Constitutional principles, Panch Sheel and Non-alignment.

2.4 Key Words

Panch Sheel	:	It was a combination of five principles designed by Nehru in Indian foreign policy.
Comity	:	Amity or friendly relations.
Non-Alignment	:	Retention of individual identity without aligning with any power blocks.
Disarmament	:	Dispensation with the arms.
Envisage	:	Propound.

2.5 Some Useful Books

Willard Range,	:	Jawaharlal Nehru's World View – A Theory of International Relations, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1961).
Baljit Singh,	:	Indian Foreign Policy – An Analysis, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1975).

- Yuri Nosenko, : Jawaharlal Nehru and India's Foreign Policy, (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1977).
- B.R. Nanda, : ed., Indian Foreign Policy – The Nehru Years, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976).
- A. Appadorai, : Domestic Roots of India's Foreign Policy, 1947-1972, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981).
- A.W. Singham and Shirley Hume, : Non-Alignment in an Age of Alignments, (London and Westport: Zed Books and Lawrence Hill & Co., 1986).

2.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

Check Your Progress – 1

1. See Section 2.2.1
2. See Section 2.2.2.

Check Your Progress – 2

1. See Section 2.2.4.

Check Your Progress – 3

1. See Section 2.2.8.

NOTES

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Unit 3 India's Neighbourhood Diplomacy: Rationale, Geographical Considerations

Structure:

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Neighbourhood Diplomacy during the Nehru Era
- 3.3 Neighbourhood Diplomacy during Mrs. Gandhi Era
- 3.4 Rajiv Gandhi's Neighbourhood Policy
- 3.5 Gujral Doctrine & India's Neighbourhood Diplomacy
- 3.6 Neighbourhood Policy of the Vajpayee Government
- 3.7 Conclusion
- 3.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.9 Key Words
- 3.10 Some Useful Books
- 3.11 Answers to check your progress

3.0 Objectives

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

- understand the broad features of India's neighbourhood diplomacy viewed in the context of its geographical location;
- become familiar with the specific outlines of neighbourhood diplomacy under Nehru;
- know how Mrs. Gandhi pursued her own policy;
- understand the concerns of Rajiv Gandhi towards neighbours
- appreciate the significance of Gujral doctrine and its import for neighbourhood diplomacy;
- understand Mr. Vajpayee's vision towards good neighbourly relations and finally
- know the prospects for India's neighbourhood diplomacy in the near future and beyond.

3.1 Introduction

It is important to note that while nations conduct their foreign policy and diplomacy, with reference to the broader outside world, the success of any nation's foreign policy hinges to a great extent on the kind of importance it attaches to its neighbours and the degree of success it achieves. While the leadership of a nation and its vision in this regard are significant, it is also useful to bear in mind that a nation's neighbourhood diplomacy succeeds only when its neighbours also share similar concerns. That is, if one nation wants peace and the other is bent upon pursuing a hostile policy then meaningful good neighbourly relations are not possible. India is no exception to this universal rule.

An effort is made in the following pages to understand and analyse India's neighbourhood diplomacy from the days of its first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to the present. The success or otherwise of India's neighbourhood diplomacy also depends to a great extent on the politico-strategic environment prevalent in the region. India's policy/policies towards its neighbours have never remained static, but have always depended on a host of internal and external factors. While all these details will be analysed in this lesson, it is a matter of great satisfaction that different leaders of India have at different points of time pursued policies and taken initiatives aimed at promoting good neighbourly relations.

3.2. Neighbourhood Diplomacy during the Nehru Era

A scrutiny of Jawaharlal Nehru's thinking and attitudes about India's foreign relations shows that both before Independence and after, his dominant goal was to work for a world free of war, promote peace, avoid the production and use of nuclear weapons and more than anything else promote good neighbourly relations among the neighbours. As spokesman of the Indian National Congress before Independence, Nehru got several resolutions passed towards those goals between 1905 and 1945. After becoming the Prime Minister of India in 1947 (he was also the Foreign Minister of the country as long as he was Prime Minister) one of the very first things he did was to outline the fundamentals of India's foreign policy during a speech delivered over the All India Radio on 7th September 1947 which is considered even to this day as reflecting the fundamentals of India's Foreign Policy and goals towards the wider world and its neighbourly. In that speech, Nehru made a particular reference to China and Russia (then Soviet Union) and said that since they are our neighbours in Asia, we will have to inevitably have good relations with them. It is very well known that Nehru not only welcomed the emergence of Communist China, but also pleaded for its inclusion in the United Nations.

Before elaborating on this theme, it is also useful to quote a few statements from Nehru to demonstrate how according to him India's geographical location was going to help her play an important role in World affairs. He once said: "India is curiously placed in Asia and her history has been governed a great deal by the geographical factor. Whichever problem in Asia you may take up, somehow on the other India comes into the picture.....India. In regard to any major problems of a country or group of countries of Asia, India has to be considered, whether it is problem of defence, or trade or economic policy, India cannot be ignored".

This and the many others such statements made by Nehru laid the foundations for India's powerful and yet good neighbourly relations for future.

The fact that Nehru's emphasis was on promoting good neighbourhood relations was also evident in the two Asian Relations Conferences he convened in New Delhi in 1947 and 1949. He invited all the important neighbouring leaders to these Conferences and underlined at those Conferences not only the need for good neighbourly relations but more importantly

the duty of Asian nations to fight the forces of imperialism and wear on a limited basis. He wanted the message of freedom and peace from Asia to be carried to every part of the World. He also helped Indonesia organise the first Afro-Asian Conference in 1955 and later on in the emergence of the Non-aligned Movement, both of which emphasised good neighbourly relations and a World moving towards Disarmament and Peace.

Regarding the more specific aspects of Nehru's neighbourhood diplomacy, we have focus on his offer of No-War Pact to Pakistan (1949) and the Panchasheel Agreement with China (1955).

Though Nehru and many leaders of the Congress were against the partition of India in 1947, they quickly reconciled themselves to the new realities. The foremost goal of Nehru's Pakistan Policy was to erase the suspicion of Pakistani leaders about India's designs (for reintegrating Pakistan into its fold). It is in this specific context, that Jawaharlal Nehru offered a No-War Pact to Pakistan and asked its leadership to come forward and sign such an agreement in the interest of Peace and amity. It is sad and unfortunate that the Pakistani leadership rejected Nehru's offer and talked of keeping the war option open till the Kashmir problem was solved according to their satisfaction. In retrospect, one feels that if Nehru's offer was accepted India and Pakistan would not have fought four wars as they have done so far.

Another important aspect of Nehru's Pakistan Policy was to prevent that nation from entering into a military alliance relationship with the United States, as he wanted together with Pakistan to keep the region free from Cold War. But that goal of Nehru too remained unfulfilled as Pakistan got into an alliance relationship with the U.S. in 1954. What happened afterwards was the unfortunate arms race between India and Pakistan.

With regard to China, Nehru signed the famous Panchasheel (five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence) agreement which emphasised mutual non interference in each other's internal affairs and peaceful methods of resolving each other's problems. Nehru followed it up with a visit to China. He wanted peace with China. He frequently talked of the necessity of both countries to work for Asian Peace and Solidarity. It is a different matter that the Chinese thought differently and pursued an aggressive, provocative policy towards India and invaded India militarily in 1962.

During the Nehru era, India's neighbourhood diplomacy also consisted of maintaining cordial and peaceful relations with Ceylon (presently Sri Lanka) and Nepal, because of the historical relationships with those two countries. India worked closely with Ceylon in the building up of the Non-aligned Movement and provided considerable economic assistance to the island nation and the Himalayan Kingdom. Thus, on the whole, one of the major objectives of Nehru's Foreign Policy was the pursuit of a Positive, Peace-oriented diplomacy with its neighbours. His policies failed not because of him, but because Pakistan and China had different goals and motives. Nehru, however, failed to perceive them appropriately.

Check Your Progress - 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain the main tenets of Nehru's neighbourhood diplomacy.

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2. Briefly identify the causes for the failure of Panchasheel.

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3.3. Indira Gandhi's neighbourhood diplomacy

Before getting down to an understanding of Indira Gandhi's neighbourhood diplomacy, it is pertinent to record that the short-lived Lal Bahadur Shastri's Government also had pursued a broadly good neighbourly relationship Policy as seen from the fact that India did everything

in its capacity to adhere to the Colombo proposals with regard to China and agreed to surrender the captured territory to Pakistan at Tashkent in January 1966 under the good offices of the Soviet leadership. In agreeing to return the territory to Pakistan, Lal Bahadur Shastri was largely governed by considerations of maintaining a friendly relationship with Pakistan.

As regards the Mrs. Gandhi era, though it is commonly asserted that she tried consciously to pursue policies aimed at strengthening India's military might and strategic power (by signing the Indo Soviet Treaty and importing heavy Soviet weaponry) and brought about the liberation of Bangladesh by fighting a war with Pakistan, it is equally true that Mrs. Gandhi was significantly influenced by considerations of peace and good neighbourly relations.

With regard to Pakistan, though India fought a War to liberate East Pakistan, it must be remembered that war was only the last option and that it was preceded by hectic diplomatic parleys with the United States to persuade the Pakistani leadership to hand over power to the Awami League. It is only when diplomacy failed and General Yahya Khan ordered his troops to attack India, that Mrs. Gandhi was forced to respond militarily to liberate East Pakistan.

Even after the war, Mrs. Gandhi made peace with Pakistan at Simla and helped its Prime Minister Bhutto to return home with honour thanks to her decision to send back the PoWs (Prisoners of War).

With Bangladesh, India signed a Peace and Friendship Treaty for 20 years and initiated measures for large scale economic assistance to help bring about its economic development.

As for Nepal, India respected the wishes of its leaders for Nepal being recognised as a Zone of Peace; India's only concern was about the inability of the Nepalese leadership to insulate itself from pressures from China and also its purchase of weapons from the Chinese.

As regards, Sri Lanka, the high mark of Mrs. Gandhi's neighbourhood diplomacy was her decision to sign the Kachhativa Agreement in 1974, thereby recognising Sri Lanka's sovereignty over the disputed island of Kachhativa. The agreement also took care to safeguard India's fishing, navigational and pilgrimage rights to the island.

Earlier in 1971 India had also helped militarily the Ceylonese Government to deal successfully with the Leftist insurgency against the Government by gave military weapons

worth \$ 55 million.

Mrs. Gandhi's neighbourhood diplomacy was also known for the initiative she took in the restoration of the ambassadorial relations with China, severed after our decision to recall our ambassador in 1962, after the Chinese invasion of our territory. Mrs. Gandhi took the farsighted decision of appointing K. R. Narayanan (former President of India) as India's ambassador to China and paved the way for the normalisation of relations with China.

The Janata Party Government came to Power in 1977 with Morarji Desai as Prime Minister and Vajpayee as Foreign Minister. Though it talked of practicing genuine Non-alignment, at the regional level it contributed to an upswing in India's neighbourhood diplomacy vis-à-vis China and Pakistan. Morarji Desai was conferred the highest Civilian award by the Pakistani Government. With Bangladesh, the famous Farakka Agreement was signed regarding the sharing of Ganga waters during lean season.

3.4. The Rajiv Gandhi Period

The Rajiv Gandhi period was marked by his visit to Pakistan and the agreement he signed with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto for improvements in bilateral relations by reducing the military tensions between the two. SAARC also received a big boost during his Prime Ministership. Relations with Nepal and Bangladesh too registered improvements.

The most notable aspect of Rajiv Gandhi's neighbourhood diplomacy was his visit to China and the significant improvements in India-China relations. The official level dialogue to resolve the boundary dispute was started during his time.

The most controversial aspect of Rajiv Gandhi's neighbourhood diplomacy however was with reference to the decision he took (without consulting anybody) to send the Indian Peace Keeping Troops (I P K F) to Sri Lanka at the request of the wily Sri Lankan President Jayawardhane. Instead of maintaining peace in the island, the IPKF was used to kill the LTTE, our Tamilian brethren which led to lots of commotion in the State of Tamil Nadu. The LTTE took revenge by assassinating Raiv Gandhi some years later. The IPKF fiasco was a big blow to India's otherwise generally successful neighbourhood diplomacy.

The Narasimha Rao Period was marked by a notable shift in Indian Foreign Policy and diplomacy from Politico-strategic matters to economic and trade relations. Under Rao,

India was keen on integrating itself with the West, notably the United States. However, relations with Pakistan and SAARC remained generally satisfactory.

3.5. Gujral Doctrine and neighbourhood diplomacy

The most notable milestone in the 1990s regarding India's neighbourhood diplomacy was under Prime Minister Gujral for the series of initiatives he took to improve relations with neighbours. The famous Gujral Doctrine popularised by him meant India giving to all its neighbours (except Pakistan) all that India could without asking for anything in reciprocal terms. Relations with all the neighbours registered considerable improvement. With Pakistan too, Gujral was able to establish excellent rapport with Nawab Sheriff and initiated the working group discussions on Kashmir apart from signing several confidence building measures.

Gujral believed that without abandoning any of India's core concerns, the Government could improve relations with neighbours by even making certain unilateral concessions if necessary in order to erase their suspicions and improve good neighbourly relations.

Check Your Progress - 2

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Bring out the main features of Mrs. Gandhi's good neighbourhood diplomacy.

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2. Comment on Janata Party's neighbourhood policy.

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3. Explain the significance of Gujral Doctrine.

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3.6. Vajpayee's Neighbourhood Diplomacy

The coming to power of the Vajpayee led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government in 1998 marked an important watershed in India's neighbourhood diplomacy. Many commentators – Indian and Foreign – have rightly argued that with his vast experience in foreign policy matters, Vajpayee brought back the Nehruvian elan to foreign policy and especially in our relations with the neighbours.

While his decision to make India a nuclear weapon state led to worldwide condemnation, sanctions and even contributed to Pakistan too overtly becoming a nuclear weapon state, Vajpayee quickly reversed the trend by his historic overtures to Pakistan and China to improve relations. His famous bus diplomacy to Lahore and the signing of the Lahore Declaration with Nawaz Sherif was widely welcomed and led to a series of confidence building measures in Indo-Pak relations. The Kargil war that followed and the overthrow of Nawab Sherif by General Musharraf, however, led to a set back to good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan. But Vajpayee wanted to give Indo-Pak peace one more chance and that was done by his dramatic invitation to General Musharraf to come to Agra for a bilateral summit in July 2001. The summit however turned out to be a fiasco as the two sides had met without adequate preparation at the official level and also because of General Musharraf's insistence on Kashmir as the core issue between the two countries and his refusal to stop Pakistan's support to the terrorists operating in the Kashmir Valley. Though the relations naturally hardened in the aftermath of the Agra Summit, Vajpayee remained undeterred by his commitment to Indo-Pak Peace. His successful bilateral dialogue with the Pakistani President and Prime Minister at the SAARC Summit in January 2004 and the decision of the two Governments to resume the dialogue at the official and political level is a testimony to the

importance attached by him to improvement in bilateral relations.

Similarly Vajpayee's visit to China in the second half of 2003 also led to substantial improvements in India-China relations; the high point being China's decision about recognition of Sikkim as an Indian State and the impetus given to official and political level dialogue to improve bilateral relations.

Vajpayee's neighbourhood diplomacy also yielded tangible benefits. Economic and trade relations, between India and Sri Lanka, India and Nepal and India and Bangladesh improved. Relations with Bhutan too improved significantly as seen by the fact that the Bhutanese King himself led the military operations against ULFA militants hiding in his country.

3.7. Conclusion

As the preceding analytical survey indicates, India has attached special significance to its neighbourhood diplomacy from the days of Jawaharlal Nehru to the present. While the normative content in India's neighbourhood diplomacy was high and at a premium, during the Nehru era and also under Vajpayee too, (and even Rajiv Gandhi vis-à-vis the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka) the governments in between, specially that of Mrs. Gandhi, gave equal weightage 'to improving India's military power and status at the global and regional level'. Vajpayee on his part added to India's power and military profile by making India a nuclear weapon state while at the same time not losing sight of the importance of improving the relations with India's smaller neighbours as well as Pakistan and China. On the whole, in any discussion of India's foreign policy in action, neighbourhood diplomacy has remained one of the cardinal objectives. Good relations with neighbours is definitely a strong favourable factor in addition to the virtues of geographical location, which helps the nation to play its rightful place in world affairs. The Congress led coalition Government which has come to power after the recent Lok Sabha elections has also emphasised maintaining good relations with neighbours as its priority. Foreign Minister Natwar Singh has identified SAARC as his priority. His first official visit was to Nepal and not to any European Capital or the U.S. That shows the priority given to neighbourhood diplomacy by the new Government.

Check Your Progress - 3

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Comment on Vajpayee's neighbourhood diplomacy with reference to Pakistan.

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2. Examine the merits and limitations of Vajpayee's neighbourhood diplomacy.

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3.8 Let us Sum Up

This lesson has been written in a critical analytical fashion covering India's neighbourhood diplomacy within a chronological framework. The lesson has covered the high points of India's neighbourhood diplomacy during Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Gujral and the Vajpayee Period without losing sight of what was focussed upon by the leaders in between. Together, the lesson provides enough material/data on India's neighbourhood diplomacy from Nehru to the present.

3.9 Some Key Words

Gujral Doctrine : A doctrine of non-reciprocity favoured by India with respect to smaller South Asian nations excepting Pakistan, aimed at improving India's relations with them.

- Asian Solidarity : A goal favoured by Nehru in the 1950s as part of his good neighbourly relations.
- Alliance : Forming a group to protect the interest of the members
- Abandon : give up

3.10 Some Useful Books

- V. P. Dutt – India's Foreign Policy
- K. P. Mishra (ed) – Studies in India's Foreign Policy
- Harish Kapur – India's Foreign Policy
- J. Bandyopadhyaya – The Making of India's Foreign Policy

3.11 Answers to check your progress

Check your progress - 1

1. See Sections 3.1 & 3.2 of this Unit
2. See Section 3.2 of this Unit

Check your progress - 2

1. See Section 3.3 of this Unit
2. See Sections 3.3, 3.4 & 3.5 of this Unit

Check your progress - 3

1. See Section 3.6 of this Unit
2. See Sections 3.6 & 3.7 of this Unit

Unit 4 India as a Dominant South Asian Power

Structure:-

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Political Leadership's Views on India as a Dominant Power – The Nehru Era**
- 4.3 Mrs. Gandhi era and India's dominant power status
- 4.4 The Rajiv Gandhi initiatives in South Asia
- 4.5 Post cold war world, India's economic diplomacy
- 4.6 The Vajpayee's era and India's power position
- 4.7 Conclusion
- 4.8 Let us sum up
- 4.9 Key words
- 4.10 Some useful books
- 4.11 Answers to check your progress

4.0 Objectives

After going through this Unit, you will be able to know

- How India emerged as a dominant power during Nehru regime
- understand how Indira Gandhi took initiative to boost up the power status of India
- Assess how Rajiv Gandhi strived to make India a Dominant power in South Asia.
- Examine How India adopted economic diplomacy during 'post-cold war period to escalate economic status of India.
- Analyse how Vajpayee attempted to improve the power position of India.

4.1 Introduction

Major writings on India's Foreign Policy and analysis of the speeches made by India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru have emphasised two important strands in India's Foreign Policy. One refers to the idealist, pacifist goals of India as articulated by Jawaharlal Nehru in various international and national forums. The other has equally strongly pointed to the realist power oriented, major power status quest articulated by Nehru himself as the originator and formulator of India's foreign policy. Thus, analysts point to the existence of the seemingly opposite two streaks/strands in India's foreign policy concerns. Whether they were opposed to one another, or whether they formed part of the same foreign policy goal orientation, the fact cannot be denied about their existence in the minds of our foreign policy decision-makers. We need to understand them as the given reality/realities and proceed with our understanding of India's role in South Asia and beyond from that premise. An analysis of some of Nehru's statements/speeches are very much necessary to understand that reality.

4.2 Nehru's Quest for a dominant South Asian Power Status

Referring to how geographical location has conferred some advantages on India, Nehru once said:

“India is curiously placed in Asia and her history has been greatly governed by the geographical factor plus the other factors. Whichever problem in Asia you may take up, some how or the other India comes into picture. It is so situated that because of past history,

traditions, etc., in regard to any major problems of a country or group of countries of Asia, India has to be considered. Whether *it is a problem of defence or trade or economic policy, India cannot be ignored*" (emphasis added).

On another occasion, Nehru said:

"I feel that India can play a big part and perhaps an effective part in helping to avoid war. Therefore it becomes all the more necessary that India should not be lined up with any group of powers. This is the main approach of our foreign policy".

An analysis of the above statement shows that one of the reasons why India eventually accepted the policy of nonalignment was precisely to guide the course of events in our neighbourhood and the world at large and not just become a camp follower of any one big power or the other. Many well known writers and analysts have argued from time to time, that Nehru wanted India to play a dominant power role in South Asia and the wider world and hence chose the policy of nonalignment which provided lots of flexibility and operational freedom in the conduct of India's foreign policy.

With regard to his China policy, also, it has been argued by scholars like Patwant Singh, Bandhyopadhyaya, Ashok Kapur, K. Subrahmanyam and others, that Nehru deliberately adopted a pacifist, friendly policy towards it as India was not universally strong at that time. From the kind of advice that Nehru gave to many visitors from India to China, it is apparent that he recognised the political challenge from China, but wanted to contain it from escalating into a military confrontation. Hence his strategy of Panchasheel vis-à-vis China.

Analysis of Nehru's Parliamentary statements also go to show that he foresaw/anticipated the possibilities of China and Pakistan developing military-strategic linkages and cooperation. His diplomacy was aimed at preventing such a military axis from developing. The fact remains that he prevented such a thing from happening upto 1962, it happened only from 1963 onwards.

Nehru also was able to foresee the Chinese efforts to sabotage the emergence of the nonaligned movement and push its own brand of Afro-Asian solidarity. He pursued his diplomacy in such a way that he prevented the Chinese designs from materialising and succeeded in organising the first nonaligned Conference in Yugoslavia under Marshall Tito.

As for Pakistan, Nehru's strategy was to prevent the entry of the cold war alliance system into South Asia and to dissuade Pakistan from entering into a military alliance with the US. Hence his suggestion for a non-war pact with that country. Ultimately when Pakistan sabotaged his plans, by entering into a military alliance relationship with the United States, Nehru responded diplomatically by initiating a policy of special relationship with the Soviet Union. He even initiated the MIG aircraft deal with the Soviet Union in 1963, started the five year defence plans, and unsuccessfully tried for a US/Western nuclear umbrella for India, which was continued by his successors in later years.

With regard to our policy towards smaller neighbours like Nepal, Nehru was very clear about two things: (a) to have friendly beneficial relationship with the Nepalese monarch and (b) not to allow any foreign power to interfere with that country so as to affect India's dominant power role. Referring to India's interests in Nepal, Nehru said:

“From times immemorial, the Himalayas have provided us with a magnificent barrier. We cannot allow that barrier to be penetrated by anybody. Therefore, much as we appreciate Nepal's independence, we cannot allow anything to go wrong in Nepal or permit that barrier to be crossed or weakened because that would be a risk to our country's security”.

Nehru continued and said forcefully:

“Frankly we do not like and shall not brook any foreign interference in Nepal no country can have as intimate a relationship with Nepal as ours”.

Nehru's references were clearly directed against China. He prevented any such intrusions by China into Nepal during his lifetime.

Nehru was also clearly interested in institutionalising regional cooperation in South Asia during his term as the Prime Minister, as in his view that would have given India enormous flexibility to carve out and preserve its dominant power status in South Asia. He would have even succeeded perhaps in his efforts but the Chinese invasion of India in 1962 changed the entire situation and dashed all his hopes. So disillusioned was he after 1962, he eventually died in May 1964 without realising his diplomatic plans/objectives for India in the region.

The supreme importance Nehru attached to the nuclear energy programme, (Not the nuclear weapons programmes) also goes to show that he was keenly interested in adding to

India's scientific and technological power in order to enable the country play a major power /dominant power role in South Asia.

Check Your Progress - 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Comment on the dominant power goals of India as articulated by Nehru.

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2. Examine the impact of the regional and global environment on India's foreign policy objectives for South Asia.

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4.3 India's Quest for a Dominant Power Status in South Asia under Mrs. Gandhi

In comparison to Jawaharlal Nehru, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was more of a realist and in any case wanted to overcome the limitations of the Nehruvian strategy of building up India's power and status in the region. The 1962 and 1965 wars were an eye opener to her and her goal after becoming Prime Minister was therefore to add to India's potential and actual power. Towards that end, she took certain decisions which began to yield dividends slowly but steadily. It is useful to understand some of them to help clarify our understanding of India's dominant power status in South Asia.

Firstly, Mrs. Gandhi rejected the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) as unequal

and discriminatory. But clearly one of the significant factor which kept India away from the NPT was the possibilities of Chinese nuclear threat materialising. Therefore she adopted the strategy of keeping the nuclear option open, thereby signalling that India may go for nuclear weapons as and when her security demanded.

Secondly, Mrs. Gandhi decided to strengthen India's defence and strategic position, by signing the 20 year Peace and Friendship Treaty with the Soviet Union with covert defence clauses in it. The idea was to add to and preserve India's dominant power position unaffected by the developments in the region.

Thirdly, her master stroke consisted in liberating East Pakistan and creating a new friendly country in South Asia which altered the balance of power and significantly added to India's power position in the South Asian region. U.S. President Nixon described India as a major power after the 1971 war. He wrote: "India emerged from the 1971 crisis with new confidence, power and responsibility for the sub-continent".

Fourthly, the Peaceful nuclear explosions of May 1974 signalled the enhanced nuclear capability of India thereby strengthening her power position in South Asia. In a span of three to four years, India's regional power status went up so significantly and visibly too that the then U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger described India a regional Super Power and U.S. writers like John W. Mellone called India a Rising Middle Power in South Asia.

Mrs. Gandhi also exposed the hallowness of the Pakistani proposal for a nuclear weapon free zone for South Asia made in the U N General Assembly from 1974 onwards. She countered the Pakistani's by proposing an Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone which would include China and Pakistan, a proposal which was expectedly rejected by both Pakistan and China.

Mrs. Gandhi also used India's enhanced Power position to strike bargains with Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Nepal's plea for a Nepal as a Zone of Peace was quietly made to become a non-starter; Sri Lankan sovereignty over the Kachhativn Island was recognised keeping in tact Indian fishermen's rights of navigation over the island. Thus, on the whole, during the Mrs. Gandhi era, India's dominant power position remained unaffected, she also neutralised the Chinese threat by initiating the process of normalisation of relations with China in 1976, and sent the veteran diplomat K. R. Narayanan as India's Ambassador to that country.

4.4. Rajiv Gandhi's Initiatives and India's South Asia Profile

While Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister was largely interested in continuing to project India's goal of a nuclear weapon free world, being a modern person with a technological bent of mind, he initiated measures to build up India's scientific and technological power by initiating research on super conductors with American assistance. He carried forward the peace process with Pakistan and China, but equally devoted his priorities for making India's missile programme modern and relevant to the country's security-strategic needs. He allowed for continuity in Indo-Soviet military relationship thereby strengthening India's defence forces as well as upgrading India's space programme.

The most notable of the initiatives Rajiv Gandhi took with reference to Sri Lanka was his decision to send the Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) to the island nation, a decision he took all by himself according to available reports. The rationale for his decision was that if India did not respond to Sri Lanka's needs militarily, other nations, Pakistan or Israel, would do so and that would be detrimental to India's power and strategic interests in the region. Hence, his decision to send the IPKF to Sri Lanka.

It is, however, unfortunate that the Sri Lankan President, Jayawardene used the Indian troops to kill the LTTE and the issue acquired emotional turns as our soldiers were being used to massacre the Tamil groups who were after all of Indian origin. The IPKF issue turned out to be a fiasco costing India militarily and in terms of loss of our soldiers' lives. It also led to a gradual loosening of India's role and interest in finding a solution to the ethnic problem in the Sri Lanka.

4.5. The Post Cold War developments and India's dominant power position in South Asia

The end of the Cold War and the dawn of the era of globalisation, Privatization and Liberalisation led to a gradual decline of strategic politics and the primacy of trade and economic matters in India's foreign policy considerations. India began to integrate itself with the world economy gradually and the impact of that was the resultant upward development in India's economic and technological power. In the South Asian region, India clearly emerged as the dominant economic power with foreign investments pouring in from the west and America

in a big way. The period was also marked by rapid strides in India's missile development programme adding clearly to India's military power. All in all India's dominant power position was augmented.

Check Your Progress - 2

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Identify the measures initiated by Mrs. Gandhi to make India dominant power in South Asia

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2. Comment on India's power in the Post Cold War era.

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4.6. The Vajpayee era and India's emergence as a Nuclear Weapon State

The coming to power of the Vajpayee led, BJP dominated NDA Government in 1998 was a watershed in India's quest for a dominant power status in South Asia. True to its old Jana Sangha promise of making India a nuclear weapon state, the Vajpayee Government took the controversial, yet historic decision to carry out five nuclear tests under utmost secrecy on

13th May 1998 and Prime Minister Vajpayee declared to the world that India was a Nuclear Weapon State. Though Pakistan too followed suit and became an NWS, it added to the country's power profile. Very soon the country developed a nuclear doctrine and analysts began to write about India having developed a small nuclear arsenal of about 50-60 bombs with delivery vehicles etc. But the political leadership was quick enough to give a no first of nuclear weapons pledge and vowed to work for Nuclear Disarmament with full vigour. India even offered to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a nuclear weapon state; the treaty itself however became non-functional with the U.S. State refusing to ratify it. India's missile power/strength too increased substantially with the Agni and the Akash missiles being test fired successfully. The United States Government, which was critical of India's nuclear weapon status in 1998 and imposed sanctions came round and intensified its interaction and strategic relationship with India. It is a measure of India's dominant power status in South Asia that the U.S. has in recent years engaged itself in military cooperation (Joint Naval Exercises) with the Indian Navy. Ironical as it may seem to be, India's nuclear and missile status has also led to improvements in India's bilateral relations with China, Pakistan and the other South Asian States. The Vajpayee Government, specially its Deputy Prime Minister Advani spoke from time to time that their aim was to make India a Super Power by 2020. Even President Abul Kalam too has articulated his vision of making India a fully developed and respected nation by 2020. He believes in the dictum: "Power respects Power". Hence his call for making India a fully developed nation at the earliest.

4.7. Conclusion

The above analysis shows that one of the important objectives of India's Foreign Policy in South Asia right from the days of Nehru was to emerge as a dominant major power/Great Power in the region. Nehru used Non-alignment to not only project India's regional and international foreign policy objectives, but also to project himself and India as a leader of the Afro-Asian nations. While his emphasis was on diplomacy and pacific settlement of disputes, unmistakably he strove for India being recognised as the leader in South Asia.

Indira Gandhi on her part did everything she could to add to India's military Power and leadership in South Asia. As noted earlier, even President Nixon described India as a major Power after the 1971 war. Rajiv Gandhi and Gujral in their own way made India's

presence felt in South Asia. The Vajpayee Government took the ultimate and momentous step of making India a Nuclear Weapon State and through its contribution to the economic, scientific and technological growth of the nation, succeeded in projecting India as a major Power in South Asia and the World at large. Through his peace initiatives with Pakistan and China, Vajpayee showed that India is a major dominant power involved with the purpose of bringing peace, security and order for South Asia.

Check Your Progress - 3

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Discuss the contribution of Vajpayee Government to India's Power Position.

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2. Comment on India's dominant power status in South Asia and its role in World affairs.

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4 Let us Sum Up

The above lesson has shown in clear terms the goals and strategies pursued by Nehru to make India a major power in South Asia and the world at large. It has also referred to the specific steps taken by Mrs. Gandhi, to make India a dominant major power. References are also made in detail to the policies pursued by Rajiv Gandhi, I K Gujral and others to make

India strong and respected in the region. Finally, the lesson ends with an assessment of the role played by the Vajpayee Government to make India a strong and dominant power in South Asia. References are also made to how the Vajpayee Government and the President have often alluded to making India a Super Power/Developed Nation by 2020.

4.10 Key Words

Allude	:	Propoese
Strategy	:	Plan or Scheme
Intrusion	:	Intruding
Neutrality	:	Remaining aloof

4.11. Some Useful Books

- V. P. Dutt - India's Foreign Policy
- Nayar and Paul - India in the World Order: Search for a Major Power Status
- C. Rajamohan - Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy

4.12 Answers to check your progress

Check your progress -1

1. See Sections 4.2 of this Unit
2. See Section 4.2 of this Unit

Check your progress - 2

1. See Section 4.3 of this Unit
2. See Sections 4.5 of this Unit

Check your progress -3

1. See Section 4.6 of this Unit
2. See Sections 4.7 of this Unit

NOTES

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Unit 5 India's Agenda for Regional Cooperation

Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 SAARC and Regional Cooperation
- 5.3 India and SAARC
- 5.4 India and IOR-ARC
- 5.5 India and ASEAN
- 5.6 India and BIMSTEC
- 5.7 Let us Sum up
- 5.8 Some Key Words
- 5.9 Some useful Books
- 5.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

5.0 Objectives

After going this Unit, you will be able to

- Understand the imperative for Regional Cooperation, against the background of South-South Cooperation and the New International Economic Order;
- Examine the reasons behind the enormous deficit behind SAARC aspirations and reality, and appreciate India's efforts for the promotion of regional cooperation and the revitalization of SAARC;
- Understand India's active role in the Indian Ocean Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR – ARC)
- Understand the compulsions behind India's Look East policy, and forging closer links with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and
- Evaluate India's position as regards yet another regional grouping, the Bangladesh – India- Myanman – Sri Lanka – Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

5.1 Introduction

The idea of regional cooperation among developing countries has its origins in the liberation and anti-colonial movements after the Second World War. Lasting bonds between people and nations were forged, as the basic principles of collective action and self-reliance were crystallized through the common struggle against imperialism and hegemony. The process of decolonisation was accelerated, because anti colonial movements supported each other, and because collective political action was taken by the developing countries at the United Nations.

Developing countries, including those on the verge of independence, were soon questioning the very basis of the management of international economic relations and the global division of labour, which were the consequences of the colonial era. They began to advance jointly a number of proposals on how the international economic system should be changed.

The Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in 1955 was the first indication of the entry of a self-aware South into the world arena. The founding of the Non-Aligned Movement in

1961, and of the 'Group of 77' in 1964, marked the beginning of collective action by the South to advance its common interests. South-South economic links also came to be established at bilateral, sub-regional and regional levels, as developing countries turned to each other for mutual support, in a bid to end their dependence on the countries of the North.

In the early 1960s, Latin America and the Caribbean led the way in putting in place a number of regional and sub-regional institutions, designed to expand their developmental opportunities. The Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) was established in 1960 by Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, and later by Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela and Bolivia; LAFTA was replaced in 1981 by the Latin American Integration Association. The sub-regional associations included the Central American Common Market, the Caribbean Free Trade Association, the Andean Group and the east Caribbean Common Market.

In Africa, the East African Economic Community, the Maghreb Permanent Consultative Committee and the Central African Customs and economic Union came into existence during the 1960s. At the same time, the initial steps were being taken towards setting up the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The League of Arab States, a political forum expressing the urge of these states for unity and liberation from external domination was making preliminary moves at that time to develop economic programmes. Its initiatives led to the establishment of several institutions for economic programmes. Its initiatives led to the establishment of several institutions for economic and social cooperation within the region.

Beginning with the mid-seventies, the debate for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) was launched in the United Nations. This was followed by the "North-South Dialogue", which had a rather ambitious, South determined agenda. When it was realized that this Dialogue had not resulted in any meaningful change of attitude in the countries of the North, an alternative development strategy was devised. This was attempted under the auspices of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, and came to be popularly known as "South-South Cooperation". A logical corollary of such a strategy was the scheme of regional cooperation among developing countries.

The four major goals of South-south, regional cooperation can be defined as follows:

1. To take advantage of the existing complementarities within developing countries by developing direct cooperation, facilitating fuller use of installed capacities and eliminating intermediaries from the North;
2. To create new complementarities and inter-dependence, at various levels, through coordination of development planning and achieving better scale economies;
3. To introduce some of the major principles of the New International Economic Order (for example, mutual benefit and solidarity) into transactions among developing countries' cooperating partners; and
4. To strengthen the bargaining position of the South vis-à-vis the North, through selective de-linking and greater collective self-reliance.

5.2 SAARC and Regional Cooperation

The South Asian region, in spite of being a distinct geographical expression and perennial source of interaction existing among the peoples of different countries from time immemorial—has ironically a chequered history in terms of regional cooperation and integration. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Which was formally launched in December 1985, provides us one of the test cases of South-South cooperation.

South Asia comprising of seven countries, namely, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Maldives, with an area of 4,468,000 sq.km., has natural endowments of no mean order. In the eloquent words of B.A. Prasad:

Geography had obviously intended the epical Bharata Khanda or the Jambu Dweepa to be one physical entity. Even in the ethno-linguistic and religio- civilizational terms, the region has innumerable common strands, causing the mosaic of a supre-nation, owing to inseparable admixtures. Their distinct origins or puritanic patents are neither distinguishable nor material. The entwining communication technology, from the terrestrial to the aerial, the print to the visual media, would suffice in times to come to psychologically further integrate the peoples of this region. The palpable concern in one nook of the region for an event/development in the other corner of it bespeaks of this common cord; these do carry the further seeds of this sprout of cooperation.

Be that as it may, it is the socio-economic factor which is of singular importance, for the problems of the region are as critical and deep-rooted as they are rampant; 40 to 50 cent of the people of this region live below the poverty line. A majority of the people are illiterate. The infant mortality rates are one of the highest in the world. Substantial segments of the labour force are bonded and slave in servitude. Very significant numbers of children are constrained to labour for their living, with substantial segments abused for carnal purposes. The high incidence of drug addiction, trafficking, gang warfare, obscurantist exploitation, demographic displacement and internecine insurgencies are all interwoven and incident to the impoverishment and lack of opportunities to earn a decent living. Yet as Prasad points out, this social turmoil gets only lip service from the governing elites. For their obsession with security, a euphemism for self-preservation and the perpetuation of the existing social order, is so pronounced and distracting as to make them spend a substantial portion of their annual budgets on the ever-burgeoning security machinery, including police and para-military force. If only inherited animosities were to be consigned to the dustbin of history, the resultant "peace dividend" can substantially transform the lives of millions in the region, a region that comprises more than one-fourth of the world's total population.

Decades of mistrust and intra-regional disputes kept at bay the possibility of forming a regional organization, along the lines of the European Economic Cooperation (EEC) or the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN). While the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the informal 'Group of 77' brought the developing countries on a common platform in pursuit of the New International Economic Order, it took the Simla Agreement of 1972 to normalize India-Pakistan relations and clear the decks for regional cooperation.

It was General Zia-ur-Rahman, President of Bangladesh in 1977, who mooted the idea of regional cooperation while touring India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Bangladesh circulated a working paper advocating regional cooperation in economic, technical, scientific, educational, social and cultural fields, and recommended meetings at the level of Foreign Secretaries, to examine the prospects of strengthening such cooperation at the government level. From 1977 to 1981, consultative and preparatory work was undertaken. This led to the adoption of an Integrated Programme of Action at the Foreign Ministers' Conference at New Delhi in August 1983, and thereafter meetings at Male in July 1984 and Thimphu in May 1985 completed the spadework for the first summit meeting of South Asian countries at Dhaka

in December 1985, where the SAARC Charter was signed.

The Objectives of SAARC, as laid down in Article 1 of the SAARC Charter, are as follows;

1. To promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life;
2. To accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region, and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials.
3. to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among countries of South Asia.
4. To contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems.
5. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields;
6. To Strengthen cooperation with other developing countries'
7. To strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest, and
8. To cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and objectives.

The Principles of SAARC, as found in Article 2 of the SAARC Charter, are also worth recounting:

1. Cooperation within the framework of the Association shall be based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, and mutual benefit,
2. Such cooperation shall not be a substitute for bilateral and multilateral cooperation, but shall complement them; and
3. Such cooperation shall not be inconsistent with bilateral and multilateral obligations.

SAARC with a Headquarters and Secretariat at Kathmandu, has institutionalized the following machinery, to help promote its objective.

1. Technical Committees: Meeting once a year, these committees are responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the progress, in their respective areas of cooperation
2. Standing Committee : Comprising the Foreign Secretaries, this Committee approves the projects, programmes and their modalities.
3. Committee of Ministers : Consisting of Foreign Ministers of the member states, it formulates the policies of SAARC, reviews progress of cooperation and decides on new areas of cooperation.
4. Summit Meetings : Held once a year and attended by the Heads of Government, it is the supreme authority for approving regional cooperation programmes, to give new ideas and to lay down guidelines.

SAARC Milestones

Since its establishment on 8 December 1985 with relatively modest beginnings, SAARC members have been gradually expanding their cooperation to cover new areas of common interest.

In the beginning SAARC focused primarily on technical cooperation with the aim of creating common ground. Eleven Technical Committees have been set up, covering Agriculture, Communications, Education, Culture & Sports, Environment & Meteorology, Health & Population activities, Prevention of Drug Trafficking & Abuse, Rural Development, Science & Technology, Tourism, Transport and Women's Development. These Technical Committees draw up an Annual Calendar of activities for exchange of information, formulation of programmes and preparation of projects in their respective fields. Four SAARC Regional Centres have also been set up on Agricultural Information, (Dhaka), Tuberculosis Prevention, (Kathmandu), Meteorological Research, (Dhaka) and on Documentation of SAARC interest. India hosts the SAARC Documentation Centre.

Beginning about 1990, the second stage of cooperation within SAARC was on the Social Agenda. Major initiatives have been taken on social issues such as eradication of

poverty, promotion of literacy, and development of women and children. It was decided that the decade 2001-2010 would be designated as the "SAARC Decade of the Rights of the Child". Particular focus has been placed on the persistent problem of poverty in the region and the Heads of State or Government of SAARC countries have committed themselves to the eradication of poverty in South Asia. A three-tier institutional structure to evolve cooperation in this field has been set up. These three tiers comprise the group of Secretaries to Governments dealing with poverty eradication and social development, the group of Finance/Planning Secretaries of SAARC countries, and SAARC Finance/Planning Ministers. This mechanism acts as a forum for exchange of information on poverty eradication programmes, strategies and technologies. Agreement on establishing a SAARC Food Security Reserve was signed in 1987 and came into effect on the 12th of August, 1988. This provides for a reserve of food grains for meeting emergencies in member-countries. The reserve is to be maintained at a minimum level of 2,00,000 tonnes with India's share being 1,53,000 tonnes.

Several Ministerial Meetings on Environment have been held so far. The Third Meeting of SAARC Environment Ministers was held in Maldives in October 1997 to consider the recommendations of the two SAARC Studies on causes and consequences of Natural Disasters, and the Greenhouse Effect and its Impact on the Region. The Meeting adopted an Environment Action Plan focusing on environmental impact evaluation, exchange of information and development of human resources through training, The Meeting also adopted a Common SAARC position on Climate Change, ahead of the Kyoto meeting. A Declaration stating a common SAARC position on Climate Changes Issues for the Buenos Aires Meeting was issued at the Fourth SAARC Environment Ministers' Conference in Colombo (Oct 30-Nov 1, 1998). The Ministers also agreed that Bio-Diversity Conservation would be the special focus of subsequent SAARC activities.

A beginning has also been made to develop cooperation in the important field of Information and Media. The first SAARC Information Ministers Meeting at Dhaka in April 1998 adopted an Action Plan for Strengthening cooperation through greater interaction amongst media personnel, cooperation amongst news agencies, free flow of newspapers, journals and books within the region and reduction of hostile propaganda. SAARC has also put in place institutional arrangements for cooperation in combating terrorism and trafficking in narcotics. Problems remain with regard to implementation of these Conventions. The SAARC

Convention on Suppression of Terrorism was signed in November 1987 and came into effect on 22nd August, 1988 after ratification by all member-states. Under its provisions, member-states are committed to extradite or prosecute alleged terrorists, thus preventing them from enjoying safe havens. Regional Cooperation is also envisaged in preventive action to combat terrorism.

The SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was signed in November 1990 and came into force on 15 September, 1993, following ratification by all Member States. The SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk has been established at Colombo to exchange information and intelligence on drug offences. An MOU between SAARC and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) has been signed.

From SAPTA to SAFTA: Cooperation in core areas of economic cooperation is fairly recent. The operationalisation of the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) in December 1995, following ratification of the SAPTA Agreement by all SAARC countries evoked much interest. The signing of the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) at the SAARC Islamabad Summit in January 2004 can be regarded as a landmark in the evolution of the regional grouping. SAFTA represents a movement away from the mere tinkering with tariffs under SAPTA, to establishing a free trade area in the region. The commodity-by-commodity negotiations under SAPTA were proving highly laborious and time-consuming and had hardly made any impact on the intra-regional trade transactions. The SAFTA agreement has the impact on the intra regional trade transactions. The SAFTA agreement has the potentiality of going beyond its stated objective of freeing trade in goods. It can make South Asia a magnet for vastly enhanced foreign investment and lead to a restructuring of the economies, making the region one of the fastest growing and most competitive economic blocs.

New areas in regional cooperation are being considered for SAARC action in the coming years. Intra-regional investment promotion and protection, and avoidance of double taxation are two such areas in which regional arrangements are being considered. Harmonisation and simplification in customs procedures is the subject of another ongoing exercise. A Customs Action plan has been agreed upon and a standing Customs Coordination Group constituted. The First SAARC Meeting to discuss measures for Promotion and Protection of Investment was held in New Delhi on 29-30 September 1997. A draft Regional Investment Agreement

was circulated by India at the meeting for consideration of Member States. India has also been asked to prepare a Concept Paper on Setting up a Regional Dispute Settlement Mechanism, which would help to resolve commercial and investment disputes at a regional level, rather than through costly international arbitration. A SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme was initiated in 1988 with a view to promote closer and frequent contacts among the people of the SAARC region, which became operational from March 1, 1992. The Scheme has been progressively expanded to cover twenty-one categories of people eligible for visa free travel in the SAARC Region. An Expert Group Meeting was held in Kathmandu in November 1998 to further expand the Scheme, rationalize it and lend more transparency to it.

At the Ninth SAARC Summit at Male (May 1997) SAARC leaders set up a Group of Eminent Persons (GEP) to review the functioning of SAARC institutions and provide a Perspective Plan up to the year 2020. It also envisages a SAARC Customs Union by 2015 and a SAARC Economic Union by 2020. In the social field, the GEP has recommended the target of reaching a replacement level of population, which translates into a birth rate of 21 per thousand, before the year 2020; attainment of universal primary education up to the age of 15 before the year 2010; elimination of gender disparities in access to education within the target date of 2010; reduction of infant mortality below 50 per thousand live births by the year 2005; attainment of 100% immunization by the year 2000 in target areas set by the UNICEF programmes; empowerment of women socially, economically and politically, and holding of regular biennial Ministerial meetings on Women's Development. Each Member-State is to set its own time-frame for poverty eradication. The GEP has recommended the adoption of a Social Charter for SAARC which could incorporate these objectives.

Informal Political Consultations: Article X (ii) of the SAARC Charter excludes bilateral and contentious issues from the ambit of SAARC. However, the Summit Meetings provide occasions for informal political consultations. Such informal consultations are, by their very nature, unstructured. The Retreats at the Summits provide an opportunity for informal bilateral consultations in the bilateral meetings between SAARC leaders on the sidelines. Sub-regional cooperation, which would involve development of specific projects involving three or more member-states is to be pursued under the SAARC framework. The objective of the proposed BBIN Growth Quadrangel is to create an enabling environment for rapid economic development through the identification and implementation of specific projects. Sectors identified are Multi-

Modal Transportation and Communication Energy, Optimal and Sustainable Utilisation of Natural Resource Endowments, Trade and Investment Facilitation and Promotion, Tourism and Environment. Tangible benefits should be in the form of poverty eradication, employment and income generation, social welfare and improvement in the quality of life of the people of the Growth Quadrangle.

Interaction between other International organisations and SAARC: SAARC has signed Memoranda of Understanding and Cooperation with several UN agencies including UNDP, UNCTAD, ESCAP, UNDCP and UNICEF, and with the Colombo Plan, EU and the International Telecommunications Union. SAARC also has limited donor agreements with Japan (through the SAARC Japan Fund) and Canada (through the SAARC-CIDA MOU).

Its late arrival on the map of regional groupings notwithstanding, SAARC has evolved necessary institutional mechanisms to address the challenges of evolving into a cohesive organisation capable of addressing the unique requirements of the South Asian regional complexity as also the challenges of globalization. Since the time of the adopting of the SAARC Charter at the first Summit in Dhaka in December 1985, the grouping has gone a long way by putting in place institutional structures at different levels to handle specific tasks- official groups to address technical aspects, a Standing Committee of Foreign Secretaries to oversee and direct the work of technical groups, ministerial meetings devoted to specific issues or sectors and the annual Summit meetings to give political direction at the highest level.

A Mid-Course Assessment of SAARC

A Symbiotic relationship exists between tension-free relations among the member-states and durable regional cooperation. Therefore, bilateral differences cast long shadows on the prospects of cooperation. At the executive level, among the many constraints, some crucial ones are as follows (K.K. Bhargava):

- Slow process of decision-making
- Absence of a consensus approach
- Exclusion of bilateral problem areas
- Absence of a regional fund to finance cooperative activities

- Lack of progress in mobilizing assistance from international organizations and donor agencies
- The fact that India, occupying the largest space in the region, has borders with all the member-states, while none of the others are geographically contiguous
- Poor intra-regional communications
- Lack of media interest in SAARC
- Non-inclusion of the need for regional cooperation at the academic level, in the educational policies of the member-states
- Divergences in the foreign policy postures
- Lack of seriousness in forging economic integration

A noted Pakistani economist, M.L. Qureshi, who was also a major champion of intra-regional cooperation in South Asia, has identified the following obstacles in SAARC.

- The prevailing political climate in the South Asian region is not so conducive to cooperation. There is an atmosphere of mutual hostility between the two major actors, namely India and Pakistan. Interdependence in the socio-economic arenas is comparatively, if political relations are cordial.
- A major asymmetry in the resource position of South Asian states, make regional cooperation rather difficult. India is a giant vis-avis other South Asian states in matters of natural resources. Hence the smaller states are apprehensive that SAARC may enhance dependency in the region.
- Although the South Asian states are developing, in a real sense, there is a lot of divergence in their relative stage of economic development. It is apprehended that under the present scheme of cooperation, more developed countries in the region like India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are likely to gain more, than the less developed ones like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. The economic relationship, more or less, tends to be on the lines of the old colonial pattern.
- There is a lack of balanced interdependence within South Asia. Whereas India is more or less self-sufficient and can supply a large quantity of manufactured goods to other

South Asian countries, it can take hardly any important goods from them. That is why the intra-regional trade hardly constitutes about 5 percent of the global trade of the South Asian region.

- Lack of payment arrangements and inadequacy of transport and communication facilities, constitute other impediments to SAARC.
- Intra-regional trade is, at present, not included within the areas of cooperation in SAARC, mainly due to the political overtones. Even on grounds of the sharing of costs as well as benefits, the peripheral states of South Asia are at a disadvantage, because of the highly unbalanced trade in the region.

Check Your Progress - 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. What are the objectives and principles of SAARC? How do you account for the deficit between SAARC aspirations and the actual reality?

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5.3 India and SAARC

A holistic analysis reveals that the problems in SAARC are merely symptomatic and essentially peripheral in nature. South Asia is indeed a highly conflict-prone region. The roots of these conflicts are traceable to the regional disparities and divergences, on the one hand, and the Indo-centric nature of all issues, on the other. The disparities are discernible in the size, demographic dimensions, different levels of development, military and economic capabilities, political systems and approaches to global, inter-regional, intra-regional and national issues. India is a decisive power of the region. It constitutes (in the region) 72 percent of the area, 77 percent of its population and 76 percent of its GDP. With this backdrop of

asymmetrical power structure, the other members with no shared borders perceive India as the focal point of their threat perceptions.

According to Prof. S.D. Muni, there are three levels of discord prevailing and persistent, derived from historical experiences, between India and its neighbors. At the first level, are countries like Bhutan and Maldives. These have taken the level of disparities as a fait accompli and with deft resilience, take full advantage of the relations. At the second level, are countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. These, while realizing the gulf of disparities to be unbridgeable, are nevertheless yet to evolve stable and smooth responses to their uncomfortable juxtaposition with India. At the third level is Pakistan, with its anti-status-quoist response vis-a vis India, manifested by the three wars (of 1948, 1965 and 1971), continued occupation of Indian territory (so called Azad Kashmir), ceding of Indian territory (to China, the Shaksgam Valley in Ladakh, in 1963), continued attempts at armed parity, nuclear asymmetry, prosecution of proxy war (in Jammu and Kashmir), sponsoring of cross-border terrorism, and so on.

These regional tensions have for long been exploited by the erstwhile super powers in furtherance of their own specific strategies. Thus, while Pakistan became a member of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and surrogated for containment of Soviet expansion at the instance of the USA, India was constrained into close friendly relations with the Soviet Union essentially for military hardware. Even now, in the substantially altered Cold War circumstances, Pakistan's hostility to India continues to show in its shifting of focus towards the Central Asian Republics and West Asia, while geographically and for a variety of other reasons, it would be most beneficial for it to cooperate with the SAARC nations.

Thus the crux of the problem lies in the adversarial relationship between India and Pakistan, to a large extent, and to a certain measure, with the imagined perceptions of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

To summarize, there are four major sources of mistrust within SAARC.

- History of the region
- Great disparity between the size and power potential of India, on the one hand, and its neighbours on the other

- The exploitation of this fear, for their own purposes, by extra-regional powers and
- Insufficient inner coherence in some South Asian countries.

According to Shamsul Haq and Pran Chopra: One of the reasons why among India's neighbours the disparity between them and India is placed in sharp relief as a major factor in shaping their security perceptions, is the slower pace of India's neighbours in developing sound political institutions capable of countering and containing the turbulent centrifugal forces inherent in the state of underdevelopment.

The first thing to do is to distinguish between the fact of the asymmetry and the fictions built up around it. The fact is that there is asymmetry. But it is a fiction that the asymmetry has in any way enabled India to impose its own preferences or policies upon its neighbours.

Despite the disparity, India and its neighbours have had no difficulty in so designing the decision-making apparatus of SAARC that all members wield the same veto. All decisions have to be taken by unanimity, and no subject can be taken up which any member considers being controversial.

The inequality syndrome in South Asia has had two unfortunate consequences, one unfortunate for India, and the other for its neighbours

1. Invitation to extra-regional powers to intrude upon South Asia. This is fraught with disastrous consequences, because of the nature of the conventional and now nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan.
2. As a shield against the fear of disparity, some of India's neighbours have embraced extra-regional relationships in which they suffer far greater economic, political and power disparities than with India.

The net result of this dependence has been that these countries have lost a large proportion of their surplus to extra-regional countries, due to unfavourable trade mechanisms and terms, repatriation of profits by foreign investors, and import of monopoly-priced obsolete technology.

It is against the above background, that India has put forth its Agenda for Regional Cooperation, which calls upon all countries in the region to recognize the following imperatives.

1. South Asia is rich in energy and there are excellent prospects of tapping this major resource, which can transform the lives of the people of South Asia. While Bangladesh and Pakistan are rich in natural gas deposits, Nepal and Bhutan are well endowed with water for multipurpose exploitation. It is estimated that Nepal and Bhutan alone have in excess of 12,000 MW of power potential which, if harnessed, can not only provide cheap, efficient and clean power, environmentally sustainable, but also tackle the problems of recurrent floods, which are a curse for over half the people inhabiting South Asia. Furthermore, if the water resources of South Asia are harnessed efficiently and on a scientific basis, there is no reason why we cannot provide safe and clean drinking water in adequate quantities to all people of South Asia. Water is also a necessary ingredient for irrigation, industrialization, tourism and so on.
2. The second promising area of mutually beneficial regional cooperation, according to India, is biotechnology in all its forms and uses. South Asia's biodiversity is one of the richest and most varied. Countries like India have the technology and expertise to develop this through networking of research organizations and business houses all over South Asia. This is a frontier area of new technology and its benefits can only be fully exploited through regional cooperation.
3. South Asia has a vast coastline and a large economic zone. Oceanography and the tapping of marine resources are therefore fir areas for cooperative effort. Her again, a lot of research is taking place and India has developed its own technologies and expertise for the exploration of the oceans and their seabed for marine resources, precious metals and ores, apart from sea transportation and tourism.
4. A fourth area of resource is based on South Asia's richest recourse, that is, its human resource. For long years, the large population of South Asia was considered a burden. This is not the case today, when South Asia alone can meet the world's requirements of IT professionals and skilled manpower professionals.
5. A further potentially promising area is tourism. South Asia receives less than two million tourists annually as compared, for example, to Thailand's six million. South Asia has everything going for developing tourism, and for that matter, using the new opportunities in the services sector, including financial services, banking, hospitality, skilled and semi-

skilled vocations and labour-intensive industries.

The Gujral Doctrine

The Gujral Doctrine was articulated by Mr. I.K. Gujral, as the External Affairs Minister in the United Front government, led by Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda in 1996. According to him, the principal objective of India's foreign policy, is to promote all-round economic and social development, with justice and equity. The accelerated development of every country in the sub-continent is a key goal of the Gujarat Doctrine. The five key elements of this doctrine are as follows.

1. With its neighbours like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal, India "does not ask for reciprocity, but gives all that it can in good faith and trust".
2. No South Asian country "will allow its territory to be used against the interests of another country of the region".
3. None "will interfere in the internal affairs of another".
4. All South Asian countries "must respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty" and
5. All countries "will settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations".

Check Your Progress - 2

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Highlight the major dimensions of India's agenda for regional cooperation.

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5.4 India and the IOR-ARC

The Indian Ocean is the third largest body of water on the world map, after the Pacific and the Atlantic. It is pertinent to note that it carries half of the world's container ships, one third of the bulk cargo traffic and two thirds of the world's oil shipments. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is populated by more than two billion people, about one third of the world's population, making it a massive market. It is rich in mineral, agricultural and marine resources.

It is a heterogeneous region, in that it has countries like India with a huge population of 1 billion plus, and tiny Seychelles with about one lakh people, and economies range in size from about \$300 billion for India and Australia each, and just a fraction for countries like Mozambique and Maldives. Yet the idea of economic cooperation among the countries of the Indian Ocean Region has been well accepted, for collectively, these countries represent an economic territory with vast growth potential.

The idea of economic cooperation in the region gained ground in the context of the prevailing trend towards regional cooperation. Undeniably, there is tremendous scope for cooperation by way of sharing development experiences and expertise, as also transfer of technologies.

The Indian Ocean Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) was formally set up in March 1997 at the Ministerial Meeting of 14 IOR countries at Port Louis, the capital of Mauritius. The then External Affairs Minister of India, Mr. I.K.Gujral, described the event as "the recovery of history" and "vital reaffirmation of the vision of Afro-Asian partnership". He was quick to point out.

It is a matter of particular satisfaction to us in India that the Indian Ocean Rim regional cooperation is becoming a reality as we prepare to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of our freedom. The difference is that not two, but three continents (Asia, Africa and Australia) are now joined in this great venture.

The Charter of the IOC-ARC, which was adopted in Port Louis in March 1997, points out that the Association will facilitate and promote economic cooperation, bringing together representatives of government, business and academia. This is a unique feature of the grouping. The Charter affirms that

The Port Louis Ministerial meeting of the IOR-ARC was attended by 14 countries, namely, Australia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Yanzania and Yemen. The importance gained by the IOR-ARC is borne out by the fact that seven more countries, namely, Iran, Bangladesh, Seychelles, Thailand, France, Egypt and Pakistan have shown interest in becoming members of this new grouping. Even Japan has expressed its desire to be associated with the IOR-ARC with the status of an observer.

The IOR-ARC members have agreed to set up a "Pilot Mechanism", a new name for a Secretariat, for coordination, servicing and monitoring the implementation of policy decisions, as well as for administrative matters. A Work Programme for specific cooperation projects has been approved for implementation. A Slate of ten projects offered and coordinated by different member-countries are at various stages of formulation and implementation. The projects are flexible with regard to participation and financing with a view to making them practical and meaningful instruments of cooperation. These projects relate to

- Cooperation in standards and accreditation
- Indian Ocean Rim Business Centre and IORNET
- Investment facilitation and promotion
- IOR Chair in Indian Ocean Studies and Associate Fellows
- Trade promotion programme
- Development, upgrading and management of seaports, maritime transport, insurance and re-insurance
- Human resource development
- Working towards complementarities – comparative analysis of existing multilateral and regional economic and trade policy arrangements and processes
- Tourism promotion and development; and
- Technology advancement.

India has offered to coordinate four of these projects, namely, 1) Indian Ocean Rim Business Centre, 2) IOR-ARC Chair and Associate Fellows, 3) Trade promotion programme

and 4) Investment facilitation and promotion.

The above projects being coordinated by India have earned the admiration of the member-countries of the IOR-ARC. New Delhi's key role in the grouping is explained by the fact that India feels that it is inseparable from the Indian Ocean for more than physical and etymological reasons. India is actually at the heart of the Indian Ocean region and constitutes the junction between its eastern and western rim. Moreover, India's contribution to, and participation in the larger Indian Ocean community has been substantial over the ages. Mr. I.K Gujral explained India's position in the Indian Ocean in his plenary statement in Port Louis in the following words.

Indeed, India and the Indian culture have been shaped considerable by, and are richer for, what the Indian Ocean brought to our shores through the ages. This Ocean also carried generations of Indians to other lands in The RIM. They have, with their effort and talent, contributed to the prosperity of their countries of adoption. A of now, the bulk of the 15 million overseas people of Indian origin live in the Indian Ocean Rim and I am sure they will be an invaluable asset in mustering cooperation in the IOR-ARC.

5.5 India and ASEAN

That South-East Asia has always been an integral part of the Indian consciousness is borne out by the fact that the countries of South-East Asia so comprehensively embraced Buddhism in all its aspects. This spiritual and cultural affinity became an inseparable part of their ethos and way of life. Successive Indian kings and kingdoms from the first century AD and to the beginning of the 15th century, had regarded South-East Asia and the lands lying beyond as vital for their own strength, security and sustained development. This intricate and abiding web of relationships, in turn, contributed significantly to India's sense of security in an extended neighbourhood, in which India is neither seen as an alien power nor as a country with a colonial past. The relationship spanning nearly 2,500 years was founded and nurtured on mutual interest and security in which both partners constantly enriched and reinforced each other. (A.N.Ram).

The advent of the British in India and the struggle for influence between European powers that ensued all over South-East Asia, suspended the continuous interaction that had

existed between India and the region. South-East Asia itself was carved up into areas of influence by the major colonial powers. India's cultural and commercial interaction with this region was therefore subordinated to the political and strategic considerations of the great powers.

Independent India, preoccupied with pressing domestic and other problems, took time to revive its age-old and all-encompassing links with South-East Asia. The end of the war and the decolonisation process in South-East Asia, in turn, sucked these countries into the very core of the Cold War. In the Cold War context, non-aligned India was perceived by the West as being inimical to its interests.

Therefore, its South-East Asian allies were discouraged from taking a non-partisan view of India and building independent relations with this neighbouring country. The net result of this was that India and South-East Asia drifted further apart, their relations lacking in substance, renewal and content.

The events in Indonesia and China's increased presence and profile in Indochina caused some consternation in South-East Asia and beyond. The creation of ASEAN (the Association of South-East Asian Nations) in 1967 was also in response to this prevailing perception. Unfortunately, India was neither prepared nor in a mood to join this nascent grouping of South-East Asian countries.

India's efforts to normalize relations with ASEAN began in the early 1990s, when the then Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao took some bold and far-reaching initiatives to restore normal relations and to focus on countries that were our traditional and long-standing friends.

India's Look East policy, to a great extent, was propelled and conditioned by the difficult economic situation in the country in the early 1990s. Our economy was under great stress and strain, and needed an infusion of new ideas, economic reforms, capital, and technology. An obvious and natural extension of India's economic space, it was perceived, was ASEAN, which in the 1980s has emerged as a significant and promising growth area of the world. With a combined population of about 400 million and a land area larger than India's, ASEAN's GDP is in the region of US \$400 billion; its exports are in the region of US \$220 billion. ASEAN is a major destination for foreign investments and a major source of investments abroad.

Landmarks in India-ASEAN Relations

India was invited to become a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN in 1992, and thereafter, in a relatively short period of time, elevated to Full Dialogue partner in 1996. Many ASEAN leaders openly conceded that they found India's participation in their activities very useful. The four areas of cooperation, namely, trade, investment, science and technology and tourism have since been enlarged and given content through the setting up of working groups on trade and investments and science and technology.

A notable feature of cooperation in trade and investment is a study of India-AFTA (ASEAN Free Trade Area) linkages aimed at exploring enhanced trade and investment opportunities. Simultaneously, at the level of business and industry, an ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC) and an India-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Committee have been functioning. The setting up of an ASEAN-India Informatics Centre at India's initiative and through Indian funding has opened up a potentially important area for Indo-ASEAN cooperation. The other areas of enlarged cooperation include human resource development, people to people contact, tourism and cultural and academic exchanges.

India has also participated in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since 1996. ARF is an ASEAN-driven regional forum, which has as its members all the ASEAN countries and the major non-regional powers including the USA, Russia, China, Japan, The EU, Australia, Canada and India. India's participation at the ARF meetings has largely been unspectacular, though quietly pragmatic. It has given us an opportunity to understand in the changed context, ASEAN perspectives on strategic issues having economic and political ramifications, as also explain our perspectives on major regional and other issues.

The Second India-ASEAN Summit in Bali, held in December 2003 provided the much needed thrust and framework for taking the partnership forward. Two broad agreements, for Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and combating terrorism, were signed. India has also acceded to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. What is significant is the framework agreement aimed at creating a Free-Trade Area in ten years. These steps augur well for furthering economic and political cooperation between India and its ten South-East Asian neighbours.

Starting from 1997, when India began its formal interaction with ASEAN as a full dialogue partner, things have been moving forward, although not at the desired pace. There seems to be a new momentum to India's Look East policy, independent of the equation with the US economy and these countries look to Washington for providing a security umbrella, they have found it congenial to move closer to India in the post-soviet union era. It is up to New Delhi to maintain this momentum and develop its partnership with ASEAN.

G.Coedes (The Indianized States of South-East Asia) and K.M. Pannikar (India and the Indian Ocean), in their classic treatises, refer to the civilizational and geographical advantage which not only gives India a unique opportunity, but also makes it imperative for her to pursue an extended neighbourhood policy. It would be in consonance with Indian history, geography and traditional links with friends and partners in the region, who have enriched each other for thousands of years. This, in essence, is the rationale and imperative of India's Look east extended neighbourhodd policy.

Check Your Progress - 3

- Note:* 1) Use the space given below for your answer.
2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Examine the major contours, and landmarks, in India's Look East policy.

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5.6 India and BIMSTEC

The Thai Foreign Minister mooted the idea of a forum for promoting economic cooperation among Bangladesh, India, Srilanka and Thailand during his visit to India in 1966. It became a reality on June 6th, 1997, with the launching of the Bangladesh-India-Srilanka-

Thailand Economic Cooperation (BISTEC). BISTEC subsequently became BIMSTEC with the inclusion of Myanmar in the regional grouping. At the inaugural meeting in Bangkok, the objectives of the grouping were clearly articulated: To create an enabling environment for rapid economic development through identification and implementation of specific cooperation projects in the sectors of trade, investment and industry, technology, agriculture, energy and infrastructure and transportation. It was also stated that the sub-regional grouping was not meant to be a trade bloc, but only meant to supplement the existing platforms for bilateral and regional cooperation. According to one analyst, BIMSTEC may be considered a “Bay of Bengal forum”, with its focus on harnessing and leveraging the advantages and resources of the Bay of Bengal, and providing a platform for both governments and the private sector from these countries to work for better results and increased gains.

At the inaugural meeting of BI(M)STEC, India was represented by its Minister of State for External Affairs, who stated: “We see BIST as a progression towards the noble objective of a larger Asian Economic Community that was the imagination of the founding fathers of the Republic of India”. He said that BIST could consult on and work out the sub-regional components for a Trans-Asian railway and Trans-Asian highway projects being considered at forums like the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). He also listed the immediate priorities, namely, multi-mode transportation hubs (marine and land), and processing and marketing of marine products.

The defining feature of BIMSTEC is that its members are the rim economies of the Bay of Bengal. If BIMSTEC is in fact viewed as a Bay of Bengal Community (BOBCOM), there is good reason to include the two landlocked countries in South Asia, which are completely dependent on the Bay of Bengal for their national economic needs – Nepal and Bhutan. In this case, BIMSTEC or BOBCOM becomes SAARC minus Pakistan plus Myanmar and Thailand. India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand should come closer and create the Bay of Bengal Community to facilitate speedier trade liberalization and increased intra-regional capital flows within such a community. The land-locked States of Nepal and Bhutan, directly dependent on this sea, may also be invited to join. If China’s South-Western provinces and Malaysia find it useful, they too may establish special links with such a group.

In the interest of imparting greater dynamism to such a regional economic group, and in recognition of the fact that it is the largest hub port serving the entire Bay of Bengal, Singapore should be invited to join the Bay of Bengal Community (Sanjaya Baru).

It is easy to see why a Bay of Bengal Community (BOBCOM) may end up being a far more dynamic group. BOBCOM's ASEAN component, especially Thailand, can help speed up the pace of trade liberalization and regional economic cooperation within South Asia at a pace faster than what SAARC has been capable of. It is also becoming increasingly clear that the only regional links that India can meaningfully forge in the near future, even within South Asia, will be those to her East-the Bay of Bengal region, the Himalayan region and eastwards. As long as Pakistan remains a rogue normal trade relations within the WTO framework, not only will SAARC remain hobbled, but even the prospects of regional economic links with Central and West Asia will remain tenuous and limited.

Against this background, a regional economic group, based around the Bay of Bengal and linking India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh more closely to the ASEAN economies, offers the prospect of widening the network for outward oriented growth in this part of Asia.

5.7 Let us Sum up

- Cooperation and regionalism is the order of the day, the world over. Its need in the South Asian context is popularly recognized, as its utility is unassailable. Even if the hurdles on its path are an anachronism, its manifest antagonisms cannot but be evanescent. The conflictual dynamics, even if to the distaste of popular aspirations, cannot be wished away in a short span of time. Considering the arduous path traversed and protracted period spent, even by other societies and regions, the performance of SAARC, at its nascent stage, is not completely hopeless. While political will would have undoubtedly accelerated the pace of cooperation, its absence wholeheartedly from all quarters, is indeed a major hurdle. If statesmanship – or the lack of it- is preventing progress, the popular yearning and economic pragmatism and compulsions cannot be swept under the carpet for a very long time.
- Strengthening economic cooperation among the countries of a region will provide avenues for closer cooperation with other regions and countries, through a more harmonious utilization of their productive capacities. Collective self-reliance has today

become inescapable for the countries of this region for their very survival. It is the otherside of the coin in global interdependence. The challenges of the new millennium leave no alternatives for the developing countries of the Indian Ocean Rim but to forge closer links among themselves.

- India's Look East policy has opened the door, for the first time since Independence, to break out of the political confines of the subcontinent that have severely limited India's grand strategic options. The Look east policy has allowed India to break the artificial political barriers between the subcontinent and South-East Asia.
- It is becoming increasingly clear that the crucial economic links that India should meaningfully forge in the near future should be those to her East the Bay of Bengal rim, the Himalayan region, and eastwards.

5.8 Key Words

Lasting	-	Enduring
Hegemony	-	Regime
Perennial	-	perpetual
Spadework	-	Beginning
Laborious	-	Hard Work

5.9 Some Useful Books

V. P. Dutt	-	India's Foreign Policy
V.T. Patil and N.K. Jha	-	ed., India in a Turbulent World - Perspectives in Foreign and Security Policies, (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 2003).
K.Raman Pillai	-	ed., Indian Foreign Policy in the 1990s, (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1997)
B.A. Prasad	-	"India's Role in the Future of SAARC" in Strategic Analysis, New Delhi, August 1989

Pramod K. Mishra - "South-South Cooperation and SAARC" in Strategic Analysis, New Delhi, August 1989.

<http://www.saarc.sec.org/>

Sanjaya Baru - "The Problem" in Seminar (Theme: "Looking East"), New Delhi, March 2000.

A.N. Ram - "Historical Perspectives" in Seminar, New Delhi, March 2000

P.S. Jayaramu - "India's Regional Cooperation Policy: AN Analysis" in Karnataka Journal of Politics, Bangalore, January 2001.

"India and ASEAN" Editorial, The Hindu, Bangalore, 9th October 2003.

5.10 Answers to check your progress

Check your progress -1

1. See Sections 5.2

Check your progress - 2

1. See Section 5.3

Check your progress -3

1. See Section 5.5

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