

India's look North Policy to Connect Central Asia Policy: A Pragmatic Policy of Indian Foreign Policy

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Abstract

Look North Policy is the important policy of the India's foreign policies. It was initiated by P.V. Narasimha Rao government and then it will be continuing by successor governments and it is still ongoing. India's abroad first air base, Ayni Air base at Tajikistan, becoming the full member of Shanghai Cooperation Organization, becomes the part of Chabahar port in Iran, beginning of Mumbai-Moscow Corridor etc. all are the part of the India's Look North Policy. India is considered one of the emerging major powers of the world. This emerging is accredited to several indicators, the primary ones being its demographic trends and a rapidly expanding economy and military. But India also needs to continue its growing status and becomes an influential actor on the international stage when compared to the United States, China, United Kingdom, France and Russia. Look North Policy to Connect Central Asia Policy may become helpful tool for India to become a major global power.

Keywords: Interdependence, energy, terrorism, security, connectivity.

Abstrak

Look North Policy adalah kebijakan penting dari kebijakan luar negeri India. Ini diprakarsai oleh P.V. Pemerintahan Narasimha Rao dan selanjutnya akan dilanjutkan oleh pemerintahan penerus dan masih terus berlanjut. Pangkalan udara pertama di luar negeri India, Pangkalan Udara Ayni di Tajikistan, menjadi anggota penuh Organisasi Kerjasama Shanghai, menjadi bagian dari pelabuhan Chabahar di Iran, awal dari Koridor Mumbai-Moskow, dll. Semuanya adalah bagian dari Kebijakan Melihat Utara India. India dianggap sebagai salah satu kekuatan besar dunia yang baru muncul. Munculnya ini terakreditasi untuk beberapa indikator, yang utama adalah tren demografis dan ekonomi dan militer yang berkembang pesat. Namun India juga perlu melanjutkan statusnya yang semakin berkembang dan menjadi aktor berpengaruh di pentas internasional jika dibandingkan dengan Amerika Serikat, China, Inggris, Prancis, dan Rusia. Lihat Kebijakan Utara untuk Menghubungkan Asia Tengah Kebijakan dapat menjadi alat yang berguna bagi India untuk menjadi kekuatan global utama.

Kata kunci: Interdependensi, energi, terorisme, keamanan, konektivitas.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy of a country is determined by times in which it is conducted (George, 2019). It is also influenced by economy, history, geographical position, population, natural resources etc. Then there are particular requirements of a country at a given time which cannot be ignored. All these have to be factored in understanding and analyzing country's foreign policy (Collins et al., 2019). India became independence in 1947 and had to evolve its own view of the world and chart its own course with in the prevailing international situation.

The main architecture of India's foreign policy was made by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India. Nehru was an idealist and a moralist in foreign policy. He nurtured the Indian foreign policy, gave it flesh and blood and shaped it in an innumerable ways (Ahmed, 2022). But he did

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not invent it. As Jawaharlal Nehru himself said, India's foreign policy was rooted in India's civilization and traditions, India's struggle for freedom, India's geographical position, and India's quest for peace, security, development and a place in the sun (Dutt, 2009). To quote Nehru :

“it is completely incorrect to call our policy ‘Nehru’ policy. I have not originated it. It is a policy inherent in the circumstances of India, inherent in the past thinking of India, inherent in the whole mental outlook of India, inherent in the conditioning of the Indian mind during the struggle for freedom and inherent in the circumstances of the world today” (Dutt, 2009).

In this article discusses what is Look North Policy and Connect Central Asia Policy? How many initiatives taken for the success of this policy? Finally, my article shed light on how this policy helping India to becoming a major Global Power. Where it is still not widely discussed in previous studies such as Westcott (2021) explaining India's policies with the east and north seen from the Indo-Mongolian relationship, Medhekar & Kaur (2022) explaining India's economic policy and Pulla et al (2020) describes concerns about Indian policies.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study seeks to find various data from existing literature studies and then presented descriptively and analyzed using Mile and Huberman interactive analysis techniques (Huberman & Miles, 2002). In addition to collecting data from existing documents, researchers also make observations so that the data obtained from documents and observations can be validated as data that can be accounted for. This research starts from finding out what Look North is and creating and analyzing the policy with its development to date.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

What is Look North Policy?

Post-independent Indian foreign policy evolved in different ways. In other words, post-cold war Indian foreign policy includes different dimensions such as Liberalization, Privatization & Globalization (Mahapatra, 2016), Look East Policy (Act East Policy), West Asia Policy, Gujral Doctrine etc. Since the beginning of the last decades of the twentieth century, henceforth, following the ‘Look East Policy’, ‘Look West Policy’ which looked after India's interests in East Asia and West Asia respectively, the ‘Look North Policy’ was visualized to guarders national interests in Central Asia (Krishna, 2020). Some scholars called it ‘Look Central Asia policy’. It was in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the cold war, the emergence of the US as the sole super power and the initiation of economic reforms in India, that the government of P V Narasimha Rao announced a diplomatic initiative, titled ‘Look East’, to build on stagnant relations with these countries. The first focus of this was the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its member-countries, particularly Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and Burma. (EPW: 2010:8) Today Look East Policy becomes Act East Policy and aims are more intimacy with these countries. Became the Prime Minister, Modi visited this countries quickly and signed different MOUs with this countries. These countries are also showing interest to Indian initiations.

Mr. I. K. Gujral, as Prime Minister of India in 1997, outlined a bolder regional policy which came to be known as the Gujral Doctrine. He was willing to go the extra mile to resolve problems with neighbours without insisting on reciprocity. The Gujral Doctrine was based on five principles (Shukla, 2008): Firstly, with neighbours like Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka India did not ask for reciprocity

but would give all it can in good faith and trust. Secondly, no South Asian country would allow its territory to be used against the interest of another country of the region. Thirdly, none would interfere in the internal affairs of another. Fourthly, all South Asian countries would respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Fifthly, all of them would settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations. Therefore, Gujral Doctrine improved the relations with the Neighbour i.e. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives. It is notable that neighbours are very important for any country because if the relations with neighbours are peaceful, cooperative, and respectful then that country be safe and developed the country comprehensively.

Similar to the Gujral Doctrine, Look East Policy and Look West Policy India adopts Look North Policy or Connect Central Asia Policy or New Silk Road Policy to improve and establish the relations of the northern countries, basically post-soviet countries in the sphere of trade and economics, strategic, cultural and education. The aims of the Look North Policy is to improved the relations with the Central Asian Countries namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and beyond. It is notable that India's trade and cultural relations with the Central Asian region are as ancient as the legendary Silk Rout, that is, long before Christ was born (Sarma, 2010). In other words, India's contacts with Central Asia date back to antiquity. It was a multifaceted interaction enriching in the process the histories and cultures of both sides. During the soviet era Indian films and music were popular in Central Asia (Joshi, 2009). In the changed context the past has become the bridge for future. On gaining independence both India and Central Asian States (CAS) renewed their contacts. The presidents of CAS visited India in quick succession seeking assistance and guidance (Joshi, 2009). Soon a wide area of shared commitment and interests emerged. Both the sides had the shared commitment in terms of building open, democratic and secular politics. India and CAS were also opposed to religious extremism and terrorism and similar views on the source of these dangers and in their understanding about the regional environment. Thus, commonality of interests lay in economic particularly energy, security, strategic and cultural spheres. India, therefore, considered Central Asia as part of its extended neighbourhood, though it does not share a direct boundary with any of the states. But the significance of the Central Asia for India is not negligible. According to former Prime Minister, P. V. Narasima Rao "for India, Central Asia is an area of high priority, where we aim to stay engaged for into the future. We are an independent partner with no selfish motives. We only desire honest and open friendship and to promote stability and cooperation without causing harm to any third country." (*Kalavaski: 2012:125*) Rao's proclamation offers a glimpse at the discursive genesis of the 'Look North Policy – the narrative framework of India's relations with Central Asia. As its application suggests, the 'Look North Policy strives to emulate the logic and achievements of India's 'Look East' approach to Southeast Asia, which seemed to indicate that India has a strategic will whose footprint reaches well beyond South Asia. Thus, the discourses of the Look North Policy have to demonstrate India's attempt to break out of the claustrophobic confines of the subcontinent.

The down of the twenty first century India's growing international profile, its growing economic strength and acceptance as one of the leading knowledge power placed in the category of rising power in Asia. In the view of its growing abilities, India energized its "Look East" and "Look Central Asia and Look West Asia" policies (Joshi, 2009). The First India- Central Asia Dialogue, a Track-II initiative organised on 12-13 June, 2012 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, was an important step towards building a long-term partnership with the Eurasian region (Krishna, 2020). The objective behind this regional conference was to start a regular annual dialogue forum among academics, scholars, government officials and business representatives from India and the CARs with the aim of providing inputs to governments on both sides. It was during the regional conference that Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. E. Ahmad pronounced

India's new 'Connect Central Asia' policy. He said that "India is now looking closely at the region through the framework of its 'Connect Central Asia' policy which is based on pro-active political, economic and people to people engagement with Central Asian Countries, both individually and collectively"(Kothari, 2014). The 'Connect Central Asia policy' is a broad based Approach which includes political, economic and cultural connections between India and central Asia. Actually, India went on a path for a deep, meaningful and sustained engagement with Central Asia. According to Mr. Sharad K Sony & Vaishali Krishna some of the key features of this renewed policy can be outlined as follows (Krishna, 2020) :

1. India will continue to build on its strong political relations through exchange of high level visits. Indian leaders will interact closely both in bilateral and multilateral fora.
2. India will strengthen its strategic and security cooperation with focus on military training, joint research, counterterrorism cooperation and close consultation on Afghanistan.
3. India will set up multilateral engagement with Central Asian partners using synergy of joint effort through existing fora like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) and the Custom Union. India has already proposed a Comprehensive Economic cooperation Agreement to integrate its markets with the unifying Eurasian space.
4. India looks to central Asia as a long term partner in energy and natural resources. Central Asia processes large cultivable tracts of land which is potential area for India to cooperate in production of profitable crops with value addition.
5. The medical field offers huge potential for cooperation as India is willing to set up civil hospitality/clinics in Central Asia.
6. India's higher education system delivers at a fraction of the fees charged by Western universities. Keeping this in mind India would like to assist in the setting up of a Central Asian University in Bishkek that could come up as a centre of excellence to import world class education in areas like IT, management, philosophy, and languages.
7. India is working on setting up a Central Asian e-network with its hub in India, to deliver, tele-education and tele-medicine connectivity, linking all the five Central Asian States.
8. Indian and Central Asian Companies can showcase India's capabilities in the construction sector and build world class structures at competitive rates. Central Asian countries, especially, Kazakhstan, have almost limitless reserves of iron, ore, and coal as well as abundant cheap electricity. India can help set up several medium size steel rolling mills, producing its requirement of specific products.
9. As for land connectivity, India has reactivated the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). But it needs to discuss ways to bridge the missing links in the Corridor and also work on other connecting spurs along the route.
10. Absence of a viable banking infrastructure in the region is a major barrier to trade and investment. Indian banks can expand their presence if they see a favourable policy environment.
11. India will jointly work to improve air connectivity between the two sides. India is one of the biggest markets for outbound travellers; many countries have opened tourist offices in India to woo Indian tourists. Central Asian countries could emerge as attractive holiday destinations for tourists and even for Indian film industry which links to depict exotic foreign locales in its films.
12. Connections between the peoples of both sides are the most vital linkages to sustain deep engagement. India will encourage regular exchanges of scholars, academics civil society and youth delegations to gain deeper insights into each other's cultures.

India's relationship with Central Asia in Soviet times was only cultural and economic; now they had to be reinforced with diplomacy, security and political. In other words, India's interests in Central Asia are fundamentally strategic and essentially commercial and economic. From the security perspective, it would like to encourage the development of stable and secular regime in Central Asia, lest weakened; unstable states with centrifugal tendencies become bases for terrorist, separatist and fundamentalist elements to strengthen their position, which could link up with counterparts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In tandem, India's interests coincide with ensuring that any instability and chaos in the region does not lead to a 'domino effect' of which there is a serious danger (Mishra, 2009). India's another interests is energy and other important issue is Geo-politics. It is notable that stability, democracy and energy are also important to USA. Whereas China and Russia not allowing USA in this region.

Approach of Different Indian Prime Ministers Engaged with Central Asia

Prime Minister	View of Central Asia	Policy paradigm for Central Asia
Jawaharlal Nehru	Playground of USSR in Cold War	Engaged as part of India's USSR Policy
Indira Gandhi	Playground of USSR in Cold War	Engaged as part of India's USSR Policy
Rajib Gandhi	Playground of USSR in Cold War	Engaged as part of India's USSR Policy
P.V. Narsima Rao	Extended Neighbourhood of India	Look North Policy
IK Gujral	Extended Neighbourhood of India	Look North Policy
Atal Bihari Vajpayee	Extended Neighbourhood of India	Look North Policy
Manmohan Singh	Region for cultural power play	Connect Central Asia Policy
Narandra Modi	Region for India's power projection	Connect Central Asia Policy

Source: Singh (2021)

According to Former Prime Minister and Leading Economist of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, "Energy Security is the Second than the food security... the quest for energy security had become an important element of Indian diplomacy and shaping India's relations with a range of countries across the globe" (Ishfaq Ahmad, 2013). 'The Hydrocarbon Vision 2025' published by the Government of India in February 2000 clearly highlighted the predicament faced by the country in ensuring energy security (Dash, 2012). According to the IEA's 2009 prediction, India's primary energy needs will expand from 595 million tons of oil equivalence (mtoe) of oil equivalent in 2007 to 1287 mtoe in 2030, an average annual rate of increase of 3.6 per cent. While according to the IEEJ's prediction, India's primary energy needs will expand from 433mtoe in 2007 to 1013 mtoe in 2035 (Hong, 2012). India is the world's 11th energy produce, i.e. with only 2.4 % of domestic energy production while being the world's sixth largest energy consumer, (3.5) in the global market (Ishfaq Ahmad, 2013) and third largest in the Asia behind the China & Japan (B. K. Singh, 2013). If India has to maintain its high level of growth, then it could become the fourth largest consumer of energy (Dash, 2012). In this respect Central Asia is very important for India.

Central Asian States are considered the next oil, gas and uranium, hydropower frontier. Central Asian Countries have great export energy potential, as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are the best reserves of oil, natural gas and coal whereas Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan hold significance hydropower resources. Various studies offer different estimates of the total energy reserves in the region. This region consists, proven oil reserves are between 15 billion to 31 billion barrels, which accounts for 2.7 % of world reserves. Similarly, proven natural gas reserves are at 230 to 360 trillion cubic feet comprising the 7% world reserves. In addition, this region consists of 18 % of uranium. Furthermore, the region is enriched

in plenty of coal and hydro-electricity (Ghose, 2012). According to Ariel Cohen, a well known scholar at the Heritage Foundation, the region has possible deposits of 170.5 billion barrels of oil, while natural gas is estimated at 15.3 trillion cubic metres (Dash, 2012). The Scottish firm Wood Mackenzie estimates the proven reserves at 26.01 billion barrels and 56.6 billion barrels of possible reserves (Dash, 2012). Kazakhstan's oil production in 1998 was 526.90 thousand barrels per day and reach 1640.21 in 2011 (Malik, 2015). the same time Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan also important reserves of oil. Natural gas is spread in the whole region, and is expected to have a greater potential than oil.

Geopolitically Central Asia is important for India. According to Halford Mackinder Central Asia is Heartland and he said that one that control the heartland control the world (Warikoo, 2016). The combined geographic area of France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Germany is 244080 square kilometres; the area of Kazakhstan alone is 271300 square kilometres with the entire CARs encompassing 3995800 square kilometres (Bal, 2004). Therefore, so many interests lead India to take the Look North Policy.

Major Development of the Look North Policy to Connect Central Asia Policy:

International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):

In the backdrop of the second Euro-Asian Conference on Transport in St Petersburg in 2000, India, Russia and Iran signed the International North-South Transport Corridor Agreement (Sarma, 2010). Later Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Syria, Oman, Turkey, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan added their signatures. The objectives of the Agreement are (Sarma, 2010): "increasing the effectiveness of transport ties in order to organize passengers and goods transport along the International North-South Transport Corridor; opening up access to the international market through rail, road, sea, river and air transport; assisting transport of goods to world markets; providing security of travel, safety of goods as well as environmental protection at the level of international standards; harmonization of the several countries transport policies through legislation for the effectiveness implementation of the agreement and setting up equal and non-discriminative conditions for all types of transport service providers from all parties in transport of passengers and goods within the framework of the agreement."

The corridor is an attempt to make trade between Asia and Europe time saving and cost effective. Today bulk of trade between Asia and Europe is done through the Suez Canal route. Trade through the corridor would take 10 to 15 days less time than the Suez Canal route. Once fully operational, it will reduce the travel time between Moscow and Mumbai by 15-20 days and carrying cost reduce by 35 per cent (*Aaanda Bazar Partica, 16 December, 2017*). Today, to travel from India to Russia means a long, winding route via red Sea, the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean, the North Seas and the Baltic Sea.

The different branches of the corridor would, in due course, also connected India with Central Asian States as well. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific has identified three routes- Caucasus, Central Asian and Caspian Sea route (Sarma, 2010). All these routes could eventually be extended to South Asia and South East Asia. The International Corridors facilitates: freight shipments within/to/from Russia and other CIS countries, including central Asia; shipments within/to/from Europe- Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; shipments within/to/from Asia- India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Yemen and Kuwait (Sarma, 2010). Therefore, India's participation in INSTC not only reduces the time and cost but also an involvement towards global initiatives which signal the world that India is moving.

Becoming Full member of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO):

India becomes the full member of Shanghai cooperation Organization (SCO) from the status of observer state and it is the continuation of Look North Policy. India joined the SCO as an observer at its fifth summit on 5th July in 2005 in Astana The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic, and security organisation, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of Russia, China, Kazakhstan Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (Kothari, 2014). These countries, except for Uzbekistan, had been members of the Shanghai Five group, founded on 26 April 1996 in Shanghai. The SCO is successor to the "Shanghai Five". India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan and official accession of India and Pakistan completed in Qingdao Summit at China, June 2018 and capacity has considerably increased.(Yussupzhanovich:2019:43) It is notable that SCO is the first international organization named after a Chinese city. Its working languages are Chinese and Russian. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter was signed in June 2002 and entered into force on 19 September 2003 (Kembayev, 2018).

The SCO occupies territory from the Arctic to the Indian Ocean and from Kaliningrad to Shanghai, its eight full members account for 60 per cent of the land mass of Eurasia & South Asia and its population is a third of the worlds. If the observer countries are included with this organisation and then half of gross population of the world would live here and take in a stretch of Eurasia from the South China Sea to the Baltic Sea and from the Persian Gulf to the Bay of Bengal and hence from the geostrategic point of view this region is important (Mandana, 2012). Another equation is that the SCO covers totalling 30.17 million square kilometres and total gross domestic product surpasses US\$ 1.5 billion (McMillan, 2009). Russia, China, India and Pakistan bring together in the SCO four nuclear weapons states. In addition the Chinese and Russian armed forces are amongst the largest armed forces in the world. The SCO also includes four large energy producers (Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) and two Major Energy Consumers (China and India) (Malik, 2015). Scholar considers this organization to have the potential of becoming the most powerful alliance on earth, given the combination of Russia's energy, military and technology expertise, China and India's economic and human capital and Iran's enormous energy resources as well as growing military capabilities (Bedeski & Swanström, 2012). So, India's joining in SCO which be one hand overcome the South Asia centric attitude and the other hand India emerged at global level with big powers such as China and Russia. It is notable that India also join another regional organisation i.e. BRICS where China and Russia present. Therefore, joined in the SCO as a full member India enriches its position at global level.

Becomes the partner of Chabahar Port:

India interested to become part of the Chabahar port because of its Look North Policy. Pakistan is a rival country of India and Afghanistan is an unstable country. In this respect Chabahar port is very important to India because its link with the Central Asian countries. The port project will be the first overseas venture for Indian state-owned port. Chabahar is turning out to be a success story in the India-Iran relationship. It is notable that New Delhi is Tehran's second oil client after Beijing. Chabahar Port is a seaport in Chabahar located in South-eastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman. It serves as Iran's only oceanic port, and consists of two separate ports named *Shahid Kalantari*, and *Shahid Beheshti*, each of which has five berths. The India-Iran-Afghanistan three-way memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed for Chabahar port. The port opened a new strategic transit route between India, Iran and Afghanistan that bypass the Pakistan. In addition, the port helps several times more trade via connectivity to 7,200-km-long

multi-mode North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) connecting to Europe and Turkey, R 297 Amur highway and Trans-Siberian Highway across Russia, and planned Herat to Mazar-i-Sharif railway providing access to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. From Chabahar, the existing Iranian road network can linkup to Zaranj in Afghanistan, about 883 km from the port. The Zaranj-Delaram road constructed by India in 2009 can give access to Afghanistan's garland highway, setting up road access to four major cities in Afghanistan- Herat, Kandahar, Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif. (*Times of India, 16 February, 2018*) Actually, The port forms the southern end of the International North-South Corridor (INSTC), a multination rail, road and shipping network connecting India with Russia via Central Asia. (*In Central Asia, Modi Jump-Starts India's 'Look North' Strategy*) The Chabahar Port also provides direct access to India's Farkhor Air Base in Tajikistan. Chabahar route will result in 60% reduction in shipment costs and 50% reduction in shipment time from India to Central Asia.

Development of the port was first proposed in 1973 by the last Shah of Iran, though development was delayed by the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The first phase of the port was opened in 1983 during the Iran-Iraq War as Iran began shifting seaborne trade east towards the Pakistani border in order to decrease dependency on ports in the Persian Gulf which were vulnerable to attack by the Iraqi Air Force. India and Iran first agreed to plans to further develop *Shahid Beheshti* port in 2003, but did not do so on account of sanctions against Iran. As of 2016, the port has ten berths. In May 2016, India and Iran signed a bilateral agreement in which India would refurbish one of the berths at *Shahid Beheshti* port, and reconstruct a 600 meter long container handling facility at the port. The port is intended to provide an alternative for trade between India and Afghanistan. This port is 800 kilometres closer to Afghanistan than Pakistan's Karachi port. The port handled 2.1 million tons of cargo in 2015, which is planned to be upgraded to handle 8.5 million tons by 2016 and to 86 million tons in the future. In October 2017, India's first shipment of wheat to Afghanistan was sent through the Chabahar Port. (*Times of India, 16 February, 2018*) Therefore, Look North Policy is very important to India at present time where globalization force to every country to appear differently, not as previous.

Turkmenistan- Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Pipe line Project:

India is an energy consuming country and day by day it is increasing. Therefore, India took different initiatives for fulfillment of its energy. In this respect Central Asia and Caucasian are very important to India. Thus, several pipeline route proposals for bringing Central Asian and Caucasian oil and gas to India and other South Asian market and India becomes the part of these projects because of India's Look North Policy. The Turkmenistan- Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Pipeline would, to a great extent, meet the growing energy needs of the South Asian countries. Both India and Pakistan will benefit from access to Turkmenistan's gas reserves, where as Afghanistan profits from fees as the 'energy bridge' connecting the two regions. Initially the project started only with Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan (TAP). India was invited to attend the ninth steering committee meeting of the TAP in February 2006 at Ashgabat, making for India's entry into the project. Indian government gave the green signal for country's participation on 19th may, 2006 (Sarma, 2010). It was finally admitted in April 2008 and TAP become TAPI. It is notable that India's joining in TAPI, makes India a responsible country beyond South Asia.

The 1680 km pipeline, to be build with Asian Development Bank (ADB) assistance, will connect Daulatabad gas field in Turkmenistan through Herat-Kandahar (Afghanistan) and Quetta- Multan (Pakistan) to Fazilka (India). ADB allotted \$1.5 mm for feasibility study of the project, completed in 2003. The pipeline is expected to carry 100 mm compd of gas, of which India's share is 60mm compd. The estimated cost of the project is around US \$ 3.3 billion (Sarma, 2010). Like over most such multinational project, the

shadow of big power politics looms over the TAPI pipeline. The US backs this project mainly to counter the Moscow backed proposal for an Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline. Initially, the IPI projects was designed as gas pipeline between Iran and Pakistan, India joined later. However, IPI gas pipeline (2700 km) announced in 2002 and expected to run 1100 km in Iran, 1000 km in Pakistan, and 600 km in India (A. Singh, 2008).

Deeply engaged in Afghanistan:

India has come a long way from the days when it used to be the world's largest recipient of foreign aid. Today India's foreign aid constitutes very marginal level. In fact India has emerged as one of the countries, which provides foreign aid to other as development assistance and in addition even offers support from the Indian military and paramilitary forces providing medical care, repair infrastructure, and rehabilitation services at times of crisis such as Tsunami, floods, earthquake and other natural calamities. Currently Afghanistan has been a significant recipient of the Indian development assistance. India in fact happens to be among the top five countries in terms of bilateral donors to Afghanistan. India take the Afghanistan seriously because of neighbor country and as well as its Look North Policy. Thus, India deeply engaged in Afghanistan. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had visited Kabul in 2005 and 2011 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an unannounced visit to Kabul in December 2015. During his visit, Modi unveiled two of India's most important initiatives in Afghanistan: the inauguration of the Afghan Parliament building and the handing over ceremony for four Mi-25 attack helicopters (Kaura, 2017). These was the beginning of India's deep engagement in Afghanistan.

India has been actively involved in the reconstruction measures and development activities in Afghanistan since 2001, even since the ouster of the Talibans. According to Mondira Dutta, the development assistance towards Afghanistan may be categorized under six major components. These are as follows:

1. *Social Development:* consignment for immediate humanitarian relief, medicines, education, reconstruction of school and construction of toilets.
2. *Infrastructure Development:* supply of aircrafts, busses and vehicles, transmission lines and solar electrifications.
3. *Capacity Building Measures:* training of school teachers, ICT professionals, doctors, diplomats, skill development, providing of sewing machines, banking, etc.
4. *Economic Development:* digging up of deep wells, agriculture and construction of cold storages, etc.
5. *Contribution to Reconstruction Process:* Afghan Government Budget and World Bank managed Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund.
6. *Technology and Scientific Up gradation:* restoration /revamping of Information systems, TV satellite, telecommunication, a mobile TV satellite uplink and TV relay Centers.

In 2021, USA and NATO declared that they withdraw their armies from Afghanistan within 11th September. Thus, the twenty-year-long war between the west supported Afghan government and the Taliban reached a climax with the Taliban offensive and the consequences is Taliban again returned in power at Kabul. Thus, Afghanistan becomes unfavourable for India. But India is trying to best efforts to normalise its relations with Afghanistan as well as Taliban.

Some of the important initiatives include the recently completed prestigious mega projects such as 218 km long Zaranj Delaram road, which ushers in more options of alternative routes for Afghanistan

through the port of Chabahar in Iran (Mohapatra, 2018). Such connectivity goes a long way in reducing Afghanistan's dependency on Pakistan in providing potential route linkages. Indian assistance to the Afghan infrastructure sector has included the building and equipping of the Afghan parliament building for USD 90 million¹⁰ and financing the construction of the Delaram-Zaranj Highway at a cost of USD 135 million and India's development assistance commitments continued to increase: USD 1.5 billion by 2014 and USD 2 billion by 2017. Some of the other Indian projects reflecting noticeable visibility among the local populace include capacity building measures of the local Afghans, the educational and vocational scholarships offer to young Afghan students and researchers, providing hospital and health services, building transmission lines and construction of Afghanistan Parliament.

How it helped India to become a major global power:

India takes the several initiatives of the part of Look North Policy and increasing its image as well as credibility. This policy increasing the Indian profile in terms of political, economic, social, cultural, technological, militarily and so on. This policy also helped India becoming major global or international player. Becoming the full member of SCO, India overcome the South Asia centric status and plays an important role in the Eurasian region, the vast region which helped India a major global power. India is the primary member along with Russia and Iran to initiative for form the INSTC which recognized the world India as an international player. Establish the Ayni Air base at Tajikistan, India's abroad first air base, and becoming the part of Chabahar port, India's first overseas venture for Indian state-owned port signals the world that India is moving towards global. Different developmental assistant across the world make India donor country from the receiver country. India joined the several hydrocarbon projects such as TAPI which fulfilled the India's energy needs that gives India as a responsible status. In addition, India gives education scholarships to Central Asian Countries and thinking, near future send its employees to Central Asia as a tourist. India may be lead to suppress the terrorism in the regional level as well as global level because Central Asian countries fully support India in this matter though they are Islamic states. With the support of Central Asian States may solve the cross-border terrorism in Kashmir which created instability in long time. In addition, India also can lead in the Central Asian region as well as globally for democratisation however India is the largest democratic country. Therefore it is true that Look North policy gives India multiple benefit for it's continues growing status. Presently, India is considered one of the potential major powers of the world. This potential is accredited to several indicators, the primary ones being its demographic trends and a rapidly expanding economy and military. It also needs to be as influential on the international stage when compared to the United States, China, United Kingdom, France and Russia. If India wants to become a major global power, Look North Policy certainly helped and open different ways.

CONCLUSION

India's foreign policy evolves in different ways from independence to till date but key point of Indian foreign policy is national interests. From independence to 90s or cold war period India's foreign policy is basically South Asia centric. But post-cold war period India's foreign policy not only South Asia centric but also world centric or globalised. Therefore, India took several policies which are South Asia centric as well as beyond the South Asia. In particular, the dissolution of the Soviet Union provoked a profound crisis in India's international identity and sense of national security. Thus, it is only the nuclear tests of May 1998 that reveal a discursive overhaul of India's

international relations premised on a much more assertive foreign policy stance. The security attitudes uncovered by those detonations expose the very bedrock of India's strategic culture – the conviction of the inevitability of India's rise to global prominence. In this respect India's Look North Policy is very successful foreign policy. This policy not only helped India becoming international/global player from regional player but also helped India to continue its growth with the ensuring supplies of the hydrocarbons. India is a fast growing nation and if India continues its growing status, needs oil, gas, coal and uranium. Further, The Central Asia–South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM) is based on the vision of a Greater Central Asia. Central Asia has been hub of terrorism and several Islamic terrorist groups are very active. Terrorism is a trans-national problem. So, India-Central Asian countries help each other to combat cross-border terrorism. This in turn, is based on the basis that Central Asia and South Asia are, or can become a single integrated unite for economic development and economic growth as well as solver of many trans-national problems. In this perspective, Central Asian states may become an alternative source instead of its traditional supply chain. Further, Central Asian States support the India's environmental stance and also support the permanent membership in Security Council at UNO as well. India's Look North Policy is very realistic policy on the contemporary global perspective. It is expected that in future India is more benefited from the Look North Policy. However, it is not easy way, it depends on several factors like, US- Iran relations, China factor, Russian factor, Afghanistan situation and international environment.

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