
CHAPTER I

FACTORS INFLUENCING INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

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Like every country India has been influenced by various factors. It is since August, 1947 India has been able to pursue her own independent foreign policy. Before 1947 India was controlled by foreign rulers and India's role in international relations were determined by the interest of Great Britain. India's foreign policy is influenced by various factors which are worth studying. Managing one's relations with other states is a necessary activity of every state. This activity of managing relations with other states is called a nation's foreign policy. The foreign policy of a country is generally expressed in terms of 'objective' and 'goals'. India in making her foreign policy in 1947 has tried "to combine idealism with national interest"¹. The foreign policy of a country is generally expressed in terms of 'objectives and goals'. India and her foreign policy has gained more importance since Karl Haushofer attracted world wide attention because of his geo-political theory.

"It is since 1954 the study of geography and political science has gained importance. Both political geographers and political scientists have stated that the field of political Geography links Geography and political science and is tilled

1. Columbia University, Address, October, 1949, by Pandit

Nehru. p 3

by workers from both sides" - and in this direction have pointed as follows.²

- 1) The subject (of Political Geography) is both in the fields of political science and geography. (Weigert 1957, V).
- 2) The bridge linking geography and Political Science must be built by and from both sides. (Kristof 1960, 33).
- 3) The Political Geography may be defined from the disciplinary perspective of either geography or Political Science. (Spront 1968, 166).

This study hence is an effort in this direction to examine the factors influencing India's foreign policy and its making. It is hard to find much agreement on the content of Political Science from the standard text books dealing with subject.

Geography has certainly played an important role in influencing India's foreign policy. The basic factors which influence India's foreign policy can be stated as (a) geographic (b) economic, (c) social and ideological factors. India occupies a dominating position at the head of Indian ocean and projects south world to within 8° degrees of equator.

 2. The field of Geography 'Political Geography'; by J.R. Prescott, pp.3, Methuen and Co.Ltd.

A significant aspects of the countries^{y's} physical location is sea - frontage:

" India is about 35,000 miles of sea frontier as compared to about 8,200 miles of land frontier, the importance of sea- frontage is shown by the fact that every year about 90 percent of Indias external trade is sea-borne."³

Such geographycal location is of a great advantage for a nation for all round progress. Political development of a country is much influenced by her geographical location. India enjoy(a central position on the trade route between Europe and Far-East. Dispite this it has been covered with towering Himalayas. In this direction Nehru himself once remarked " We are in strategic part of Asia set in the centre of the Indian ocean with intimate past and present connections with Western Asia, South East Asia and Far-eastern Asia."⁴ Indias geographical position was reminded by Nehru on more than one occasions. It was on March, 1947, Nehru addressing the Asian relations conference in Delhi stated,

" Geography is compelling factor and geographically she is^{so} situated to be the meeting[^] of Western a[^]nd Northern and Eastern and South East Asia."⁵

3. Refer, India Quarterly, nine 1953, pp.160-169.

4. ^a Kyranakar Gupta, Indian Foreign Policy, 1956, p.1.

5. Refer Report on First Asian Relation Conference, March-April 1948, 1947, p.23.

Nehru, writing in (1927) said:

In this direction even U.S.S.R. once writing to Nehru pointed "India is large country spanning half over Asia and Europe between two such countries as India and Russia can be amity or Enmity."⁶ ... difference is only question.

India is the seventh most extensive and second most populous country is also the largest democracy in the world lying in the Northern hemisphere,

It extends between latitudes $8^{\circ}4'18''$ and $37^{\circ}17'53''N$ and longitudes $68^{\circ}7'33''$ and $97^{\circ}24'47''E$. It measures about 3,219 kilometres from North to South 2,977 kilometres from East to West and covers an area of 3,267,053 square kilometres. It has a land frontier 15,168 kilometres long and a coastling of 5,689 kilometres.

India is clearly set apart from the rest of Asia by a broad no man's land of mountains, jungle covered on the India Burma frontier, ice bound on the India-Tibet border and desert (Thar) in the West. The almost impassable Himalayas isolate India from Tibet on the North and the two flanking highlands the Hindukush in the West and the Lushai Hills in the East are continuous with them, thus isolating the sub-continent from Asia.

K.M.Panikkar once asserted, "politically India was isolated from the rest of the continent and became introspective

6. Quest, September, 1973, Indo.Soviet Relations.

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in its attitude."⁷

Isolation inhibited India's development of international relations. The only doctrine followed in the ancient and medieval period by powerful rulers like Ashoka and Akabar was to bring all of India under one control. At no time in its history has India had a policy of external aggression.

Pass Routes: The Himalayas of course are not quite impenetrable but overland travel is very difficult and dangerous. A few passes are used for the transporting of goods on the back of man or beast. Tibet is reached from Srinagar across the Zojila to Leh and thence across the Karakoram pass. Perhaps the best known and most important pass in the whole mountain system. The Akasai Chin road in Ladakh is the first trans Himalayan motor road to be kept open throughout the year. Between Punjab and Tibet the K.Lang, the Shipki and the Nitipasses are of some importance but for hundreds of miles farther east there is not route across the Himalayas until Darjeeling is reached. The Jelep La and Nathu La are the important passes between Sikkim and Bhutan on the main Indo-Tibetan trade route through the Chumbi Valley. Northeast of Darjeeling from India to Burma there are half a dozen routes none of them much used. In Northern Burma there is the Jukawng Valley route and the Tulu gap route, but a somewhat

7. K.M.Panikkar, Geographical Factors in Indian History, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1955, p.50.

easier route is through Manipur. This latter route was followed by the allied troops who drove the Japanese out of Burma in 1945. " The An and Taugup passes merely link central Burma with the Arakan Range. From the Indian side movement by sea to the Irrawaddy delta channels was far easier and of great importance in Burma's history"⁸ cultural mixing in the sub-continent came largely from Northwest rather than from the North or Northeast.

The great plain of Northern India- Between peninsular India and the Himalayan mountains lies the alluvial plain of the Sutlej, the Gunges, ^YJam~~y~~na and the Brahaputra rivers, commonly referred to in its entirety^Y as the great plain of Northern India. This plain is approximately 2,400 kilometers long with, a width varying from 150 to 500 kilometers and a total area of 770,000 square kilometres. It is one of the largest alluvial plains in the world. The gradients of the plain is so gentle that over most of the surface it is imperceptible to the eye. A notable feature of the plain is the immense thickness and uniform character of the alluvium which forms the subsoil of the plain. The plain has had a number of direct and indirect influences on the political geography of the country.

8. W.Gorden East and O.K.H.Spate, The Changing Map of Asia- A Political Geography, London, Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1958, p.132.

Nehru the maker of India's foreign policy was quite aware of India's insular position bounded on the sea by three sides and the mountains on the North side is a crucial element in making a nation's foreign policy. Knowing these facts, Nehru in his speech once said:

" A big size of a country is important in two ways, on one hand it makes conquest difficult and if a country big in size and is weak it invites an aggression."⁹

This points to the geographical knowledge which the maker of the foreign policy of India possessed. India's strategic location has placed India well in easy reach of many sensitive areas in the world including China, the South East co-Asian countries, West Asia, East Africa. All these geographical factors Nehru knew, would effect the development on the standing geographical position of India, Nehru realised the role of India in international context in the near future. He had realised self needs of a developing nation in to a strong and industrialized country, the dream which Nehru had cherished. In this direction India would need, co-operation with many of her neighbours to develop her industrial capacities. On the other hand the geographical location had also a heavy bearing upon her security. " The geographical factor further also influence

 9. Sisir Gupta, India and Regional Intergration, 1964,
p.5 to 6.

the pattern of relief in India influencing the agricultural pattern and the commercial pattern"¹⁰.

Strategic role of the sea - since India is closed in on three sides by mountain ranges, trade routes have normally been easier by sea. The Peninsular India is protected by the Indian Ocean which can be claimed as mare nostrum. *in sea*
According to Commander V.A.Kamath of Indian navy, the truth of the saying " He who rules on the sea will shortly rule on the land has as far as India is concerned been borne out by the events of history. It is a significant fact that although large portions of North India were conquered many times by foreigners, India was never ruled by a monarch who did not have his capital in India except when it came to the naval power of the British"¹¹.

During the second world war, a short period of Japanese supremacy in the Indian Ocean followed the capture of Singapore and the occupation of the Andaman Islands demonstrated that the threat to that ocean from the side of Pacific can be real one. Besides the nations adjustment ^{unt} to the Indian Ocean have neither the air nor the naval forces to

10. Gordon East and O.H.K.Sapate, The Changing Map of Asia-
The Political Geography, 1950, pp.121-144.

11. K.M.Fanikkar, op.cit.p.71.

protect themselves against outside aggression separately or collectively. No single nation can afford to build up the naval strength to protect the entire area including India.

During the British colonial period, India followed a territorial water limit of three miles alongwith Britain and most of her colonies. A proclamation was issued by the President of India on March 22, 1956, however to extend the territorial waters out to six nautical miles. A subsequent proclamation issued on September 30, 1967 extended the territorial waters to 12 nautical miles. This proclamation superseded all previous ones. The Republic of India has the obligation to ensure its effective control over as wide an area of the sea adjacent to its coasts as is compatible with international law. The nation has chosen a 12 miles zone in order to safeguard its territorial integrity as a developing country to facilitate exploiting and utilizing the natural resources of the sea in the most effective manner. Besides strategic and economic necessities, the overseas Indian settlements along the entire arch from the Cape of Good Hope to Malaya in Kenya, Tazania the Republic of South Africa, Mauntius Cylon and Burma are of great concern to the Indian State.

Geographical features also influence the physical features. India has a climate which combines with relief to

help or a hinder human activity. It has an attractive climate with temperature neither too hot nor too cold, adequate rainfall which suits for energetic population"¹². It is not only the geography and climate which has influenced India's foreign policy but it is also the mineral wealth which is an important factor in making India's foreign policy. To be clear the real political strength of a country lies in its natural resources.

India's mineral wealth includes water, soils and natural ~~vegetation~~. It has big stocks of millions of tones of coals reservers, thousands of square miles of Arable land, Mica, eliminate managanese and also posses worlds largest reservers of high grade iron ore. To ^{sum} up India's mineral position is on the whole satisfactory.

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The following table points the mineral wealth.

12. Refer, Ellsworth, Hunting Tongue.

13. Refer, J.A.Dunn, Ores and Minerals in India, Vol.II, No.8, 1947, pp.382.

NATIONAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN PRINCIPAL MINERALS

Essential Minerals	India	U.S.A.	U.S.S.R.	China
Antimony	0	0	0	+
Asbestos	-	-	e	0
Barium	=	-	=	0
Bauxite	=	=	=	0
Beryllium	e	=	0	0
Borates	0	c	=	?
Chromite	+	-	e	0
Coal	=	e	-	+
Columbitetantalite	e	-	-	?
Copper	-	+	-	e
Gold	e	e	e	0
Graphite	=	-	=	0
Iron ore	+	+	e	+
Kyanite	+	-	-	?
Lead	0	+	-	-
Magnetite	e	-	e	-
Manganese	+	-	e	0
Mica	c	-	+	0
Molybdenite	0	c	0	0
Monazite	c	0	0	?
Nickel	0	0	0	-
Petroleum	-	c	e	0

Essential Minerals	India	U.S.A.	U.S.S.R.	China
Phosphates	-	+	e	0
Platinum	0	+	+	0
Potash	=	-	e	0
Sulphur	0	+	=	0
Talc	=	e	=	?
Tin	0	0	0	+
Titanium	c	0	0	?
Tungesten	=	-	0	+
Vandium	0	-	0	0
Zinc	0	+	, =	-

c : World control;

+ : Large excess

e : Excess

= : Sufficiency

- : Deficiency

0 : No appreciable supply
or entirely absent.

Minerals resources are very important for the development of the country. The actual national power rests on the economic development or economic strength of the political area. Although no nation is wholly self sufficient in natural resources much depends upon the international policies which a nation adopts.

Nehru knew the potentiality of India's resources (Physical and mineral) and hence all these would be of no use without the co-operation from advanced countries.

Soils only affect the political situation in reference to the productivity of crops and suitability of different crops. The most important and productive soil of India is the alluvial soil of the Sutleg-Ganges plain and the delta regions of the Southern rivers. These fertile soils yield high crop production and relative prosperity to the areas concerned, thus helping to create political stability. The Vidharbha area of rich regur (a rich black loam) soil opposed union which Maharashtra is an area of poverty in part generated by less than fertile agricultural soil. The fertility of the soil of India in general has been depleted due to continuous use and failure to fertilize. Even establishing a fertilizer plant in a certain section of the country brings conflict and political problems, since every State wants to establish a fertilizer plant within its own State boundaries a situation which is simply not economically feasible, such plants can only be established where raw materials are easily available.

future problem

Geography plays an important role in influencing a nation's foreign policy. In recent times it is important for political scientists to understand political geography. Geography is much linked with international relations,

Page 3/4

international politics, international organization and administration and international law. The study of geographical factors in the study of international relations has not attracted much attention. The study of politics and foreign policy of a country stands to-day between international politics and the study of international organization. The influence of geographical factors on politics is well illustrated by J.R.V. Press Cott "Political Geography" p.p.5. According to Mackinder "India forms an integral part of world island that is Euro-African Asian land-mass, the most important single geographical Unit of the world"¹⁴.

Ideally non-alignment as India's foreign policy has its origins in India's urge for development. This urge of India taking shape as country can be better illustrated from what Nehru stated, on September, 1946, when he assumed the charge of foreign affairs portfolio.

He stated that India, ... is youthful again with a faith in herself and her a mission ... she looks out on the wide world and holds out her hands in friendship to the other peoples of the world, even though that world may still be full of conflicts and thoughts of war... We shall take full part in international conference as a free nation with

14. G.E.Peracee, World Political Geography, New York, 1951 pp.517-518.

torical Survey	Contem- parary studies	Colo- nial poli- tics.	Linkage politi- cs.	International Relations		
				Inter Nat. Pol.	Inter Nat. Org.& Adm.	Inter. Nat. Law.

Biogr class distr tion plant	/	/	/	X	X	X
Clima Types distr tion.	/	/	/	/	X	/
Geomc ology Terra River	/	/	/	/	X	/
Lo cat	/	/	/	/	/	/
Econo Geogr Resou Trade erns type ibuti	/	/	/	/	/	/
Popul Geogr Total ribut Quali of ch	/	/	/	/	/	/

nce of geographical factors on politics.

our policy and not merely as a ~~satellite~~ of another nation... We propose to keep away from the power politics of groups aligned against one another.

India expects early realization of full independence in action both in our domestic affairs and our foreign relations. This speech of Nehru points to Nehru's geo-political knowledge. He knew the path of India in terms of political geography. In India geo-political importance has not only affected the forming of India's foreign policy but also it has affected the people towards all economic, social and political problems. Besides, this there is diversity in religion and language, cultural pattern etc. Taking all this in consideration, an enlightened policy both at home and foreign affairs would help India to keep pace of progress. It is because of these geographic factors India's leadership in Southern Asia is established. India's geography will remain an important factor in considering it's influence in international affairs as well as in international relations.