

# VARIABLES OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

**Sumit**

M.Phil Scholar,

Deptt of Political Science,

Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

Email: [sumitlathwal7@gmail.com](mailto:sumitlathwal7@gmail.com)

## 1.0 Foreign Policy:

Foreign Policy can be defined as the process of dealing or the interaction of a state in world system is called foreign policy.

According to George Modelski “the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behavior of other states for adjusting their own activities to the international environment is called foreign policy.”

According to Rdee “Foreign policy involves the formulation and implementations of a group of principles negotiating with other states to protect its interests.”

The above definitions make it clear that foreign policy is the group of principles determined by the states. These principles involve those interests which influence the behavior of the states, tending to establish their relations to further and promote them.

## 2.0 Four The ories of Foreign Policy

**2.1 Innenpolitik** Assumes that foreign policy is a direct outgrowth of domestic politics. Issues such as ideology, culture, and economics are oft-cited factors shaping states' foreign policies. Rose criticizes *Innenpolitik* theorists for failing to explain why similar states behave dissimilarly (and vice versa).

**2.2 Offensive Realists:** also termed “aggressive realists” – posit a Hobbesian world wherein states seek to maximize what little security they have. Foreign policy then consists of ‘nervous states jockeying for position within’ this anarchic framework. (149) According to Rose, offensive realism falls short because states in similar structural positions often behave dissimilarly.

**2.3 Defensive Realists:** also conceive of the system as fundamentally anarchic, but the anarchy is more innocuous. States can deal with most external threats through tweaks of the power balance; only in certain fear-breeding situations or with irrational rogue states does international violence break out. Foreign policy consists of (largely peaceable) reactions to systemic factors.

**2.4 Neoclassical Realists** reject the assumption that states' sole aim is security; instead, states attempt to use their power to direct the international system towards their own goals and preferences. Therefore, states that are more powerful will prosecute foreign policies that are more far-reaching. Unit level factors also matter, though; factors such as state structure and élites' psychology refract international politics and determine responses.

## 3.0 Variables of India's Foreign Policy

Variables of foreign policy mean those determinants and factors which influence the foreign policy of a country. There are many factors which are regularly influencing India's foreign policy. It is not possible to discuss all of them here so we will discuss some of them here briefly. Broadly speaking, these factors fall into two categories which are internal and external factors.

### 3.1 Internal Factors

Internal factors are those factors which compel any country to adopt certain foreign policy internally. Some of these are given as follows.

**3.1.1 Size:** The size of a state's territory as well as its population greatly influences its foreign policy. India has a large territory with a long boundary line. So it's has to take care of it's long land boundary as well as coastline. India share it's border with nine states, So it has to deal so much neighboring countries to set its policy. India has more than 130 crore population but it has little job opportunities so it is facing so many problems simultaneously. Therefore it has lot to take care to play an active role in international community.

**3.1.2 Geography:** The geography of a country including climate, fertility and location influence the country's foreign policy. India has a feasible climate so it is an agricultural country. It exports many cash crops so it has made good relations with those countries which need these things. India has trade relations with 80 countries. India exports cotton, rice, wool, leather, fish, carpets, shoes, tobacco, medicines and sports items.

**3.1.3 The Cultural and Historical Traditions:** The cultural and historical traditions of a country also deeply influence the foreign policy. India enjoys the common culture and historical experiences so it does not face any difficulty to determine its foreign policy. India is a secular country and it has lot of diversity. so it has a clear cut policy that India will favor the secular movements in different countries. India is the biggest and most successful democracy in the world. There are no two opinions about good relationships with democratic countries.

**3.1.4 Economic Developments:** The economic development has its greater impact on foreign policy of that country. Just after independence India was not among the most industrial economy of the world so its economy was weak. Therefore it had dependent upon World Bank, Asian Development Bank, IMF and USSR for assistance for a long time. These above mentioned institutions and countries interfered in internal matters of India which somehow restricts it to make a bold foreign Policy. But after some time India increased it's industrial capacity and freed itself from external pressure. It has been playing a key role in south Asian politics. India joined many pacts and alliances due to its weak economy at that time but now leading a front role in various institutions.

**3.1.5 Advancement in Technology:** Advancement in technology, which affects military and economic capabilities of a state, also exercises profound influence on foreign policy of that particular state. India has a strong and well equipped military which has shown its capabilities in many international issues as UN Force. Pakistan is 6<sup>th</sup> World Atomic Power so its position is strong in the region. It can talk to Pakistan and other Asian countries on equal level. With technology advancement India is a becoming a great power in the Asian region and it can influence the foreign policy of its neighbor.

**3.1.6 National Capacity:** A national capacity of a state also exercises great influence on its foreign policy. National capacity depends on military might, technological advancement and economic development. Our neighboring friend China has increased its national capacity but we cannot increase it due to certain reasons. That is why our foreign policy is not set according to national will. We could not solve Kashmir Issue even after 66 years of independence.

**3.1.7 Social Structure and Ideology:** The social structure of a society also exercises profound influence on its foreign policy. A society which is sharply divided on the basis of wealth, religion, ideology regional imbalances etc. cannot pursue effective foreign policy on account of division and lack of co-operation among various groups. But India has more or less heterogeneous society but possessing strong sense of national unity. But at the same time there are different ideologies working so it is little difficult to our think tanks to set one dimensional foreign policy like our neighbors. It is not easy to them to take a decision as it is very difficult to determine the common public opinion about any specific issue due to high diversity.

**3.1.8 Political Accountability and Public Opinion:** The nature of political accountability prevailing in a system also greatly influences the foreign policy of the country. Accountability of policy maker help to keep them in mind public opinion. India has democratic types of regimes in history so it is prerequisite of a democratic regime to have political accountability. Without political accountability there is no good governance and constitutionalism. In democratic eras, the demands of citizen and groups are given much importance and get articulated and transmitted to foreign policy formulators. Policy formulators anticipated these demands while formulating the foreign policy. In military regimes, public reactions are never given any importance in formulation of foreign policy. But India has never gone through this type of regime. So there has always been public opinion in the mind of policy makers.

**3.1.9 Leadership:** It also plays an important role in the shaping of country's foreign policy. India's politics is mainly driven by our leaderships. From Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru to Narendra Modi, each important step about our fate is taken by our leaders. During cold war era our prime minister took the path of Non-Alignment and during India-Pakistan conflict our leader decided to choose USSR camp. During Indira Gandhi era our government focused on technology development and slowly developed its atomic policy. In the later period Prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee sanctioned testing of atomic bomb. These two positive steps of our leaders gave India an equal position in world politics. Our leaders always played a crucial role in world politics and gave direction to our foreign policy.

**3.1.10 National Interests:** It is one of the main determinants of foreign policy of any country. Our foreign policy is normally changed by changing our national interests. Just after independence our major interest was economic development and technological advancement, so we decided not to join any of the camp because it could hamper our economic growth. After getting a foothold in economic areas India decided to take part in regional and world politics. So for that purpose we decided to be a part of various regional organisations as well as international organisation. Now we have normalized our relations and given MFN status to Pakistan due to our national interests because we thought it could lead to some progress in our relations. So to create stability in our backyard India helped its neighbour without expecting any favour in exchange. That is why someone said that there is neither eternal friend nor eternal foe but eternal national interests.

**3.1.11 Geopolitics:** India's geopolitics has affected its foreign policy very much. It is located in the Indian Ocean. India is the heartland in the South Asian region so it plays an important role in the South Asian politics. India shares its border with China as well as central Asian countries. India is the largest and most powerful country in the South Asia and it shares its border with all the South Asian states so it compels India to resist any kind of outer influence in the region. USA has now much interest in India due to its geopolitical situation in Asia region because India is the only state in Asia which can resist China increasing power in world politics. Due to its strategic position in Indian Ocean, it is India's responsibility to tackle increasing power of China in the Indian Ocean because most of trade took place through Indian Ocean.

## **4.0 External Factors**

**4.1 Power Structure:** The power structure prevailing in the world politics also greatly influences the policy of a country. In Cold War Era there was bi-polar system in the world and entire world was divided into two camps, one was led by USA and the other one was led by USSR so India stayed out of both camps. It helped India to formulate its independent foreign policy and not to take any unnecessary action that could hamper India's national interest. But at the same time India couldn't stay out of world politics. So to make its voice loud in international forum India decided to organise a group of third world countries and launched Non-Alignment movement. After Cold War Era, the world became uni-polar and USA became the king of the world. India became an ally of USA and slowly became an integral part of world politics. So India changed its foreign policy according to power structure at the world level.

**4.2 International Organizations:** The contemporary international organizations have the deep impact on the foreign policy of India. While deciding about foreign policy, leaders have to keep in mind the international law, treaties and contracts and the commitments international as well as regional organizations. The most influencing organizations are The United Nations, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and The World Bank.

**4.3 Reaction of Other States:** While formulating its foreign policy, India has to take note of the reaction of other states to its various actions. If India tries to be over friendly with Israel, it will face a strong opposition of Muslim Countries. So India didn't pursue full diplomatic relations with Israel in the early years. So from 1950 to early 1990s, the relation remained informal between Israel and India.

## **5.0 Conclusion:**

India's foreign policy is influenced by two main types of factors which are internal factors and external factors. Our country cannot ignore any one type of these factors. So if this claim is not true that the foreign policy of any country especially India is not affected by any factor and it is according to the will of its population because the will of the population is also a factor affecting the foreign policy.

**6.0 References :**

1. Elman, Miriam. Fendius. *The Foreign Policies of small states*. Cambridge University Prsss, April 1995.
2. Harvey Glickman, Professor Emeritus. *A Note on Contemporary IR Theory and Foreign Policy Today*. Political Science Department, Haverford College: The Forum on Public Policy, 2010.
3. Hudson, Valerie M. *Foreign Policy Analysis Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Department of Political Science Brigham Young University, October 1995.
4. HUDSON, VALERIE M. *Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor Specific Theory and The Ground of IR*. Brigham Young University, 2005.
5. Juliet Caarbo, Jaffery S. Lantis and Ryan K. Beasley. *An Analysis of Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective*. CQ Press, 2012.
6. Neak, Laura. *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Changes in its 2nd Generation*. Englewood Cliffs; NJ. Prentice Hall, 1995.
7. Rose, Gideon. "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy." Oct, 1998.
8. Schuessler, Sebastian Rosato and John. "A Realist Foreign Policy for the US, Vol 9." Dec, 2011: 818.
9. Tayfur, M. Fatih. *Main Approaches to the study of Foreign Policy*. Ankara, Turkey: Department of IR, Middle East Technical University, 1994.
10. Timothy, Professor. *The Study of Foreign Policy*. Los Angeles: US Foreign Policy Pols 425, n.d.