



Role of Soft Power in India's Foreign Policy

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ABSTRACT

India made a revolutionary change in its foreign policy from hard power to soft power. As we see in very recent Kashmir Issue, the condition was very sensitive for India because of 18 soldiers killed in Uri Army Camp by an army strike of Pakistan Army. Most probably Indian people were waiting for a step by hard power but Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi didn't go forward within that way. In his public speech after Uri attack Mr. Modi challenged Pakistan to go to war against poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and infant mortality instead, saying "let's see who wins those wars", India or Pakistan. "I want to say that India is a ready for a war...India is a ready for a war on poverty. Let both countries see who would eradicate poverty. I want to tell the youth of Pakistan, let's have a war on ending unemployment... I want to call out to the children in Pakistan, let's declare war on illiteracy. Let's see who wins. Let's declare war on infant mortality and maternal deaths". Modi also said in another public speech addressing Pakistani people, "We both gained independence in the same year but (today) India exports software and your leaders export terrorists". If we analyze Mr. Modi's step in Kashmir incident it is proved that Indian foreign policy has moved from hard power to soft power though implementation of soft power in Indian Foreign Policy is not new.

Keywords: *role, foreign, India, soft power, Narendra Modi, war, speech, public*

INTRODUCTION

Indian soft power capabilities and potentialities come from its history, culture, civilization and geography. With a glad history and old civilization, India is one of the rising power countries in the current world politics. India has a large manpower and population resource, extend geography, glorious culture and tradition which are attract easily to other nation.

According to Joseph S. Naye, "Soft power is attractive power. In terms of resources soft power resources are the assets that produce such as attraction". In the present time extend of Bollywood rapid economic development, greater academic and research large number of Media, skilled manpower with a big number of diaspora is the main tools of Indian soft power. Hence, focusing of Indian foreign policy is more towards South Asian countries because of its culture appreciates in its immediate neighborhood. Moreover India continues to have tremendous potential in soft power with several countries in the world.[1,2]

Power in International Relations (IR) is defined in relational terms, as the ability of actor A to influence the behavior of actor B to get the outcome he wants. . That is to say, there is no absolute power. Traditionally, military and economic powers were considered the major factors. However, some other intangible aspects have also been given importance by many strategic thinkers even in the past. The term Soft Power was first used by the eminent IR scholar Joseph Nye in his book "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power." In the book, he identified three dimensions of power; coercion by military force, influence by offering economic incentives and finally the ability to co-opt other states by the nation's appeal based on its culture and values. The argument is that other states modify their preferences because of their favorable perception of you. They like your story and your narrative.[3,4]

Observations

An effective leveraging of soft power diplomatic tools remains critical in the current geopolitical uncertainty. It is not an easy task given that social media today is being aggressively manipulated by malevolent actors and social groups through the deployment of

advanced technological tools. As a culturally diverse, democratic country with a large aspirational, extroverted population pursuing socio-economic mobility, India's image is that of a benign country confident of its growing role in the international community in support of democracy, international cooperation, stability, and commitment to multilateralism as an effective way to meet our common global challenges.[5,6]

It is not that of aggressive, revisionist power, and its growing military strength is not seen as threatening by an overwhelming number of countries both near and far. Its millennial civilization and growth story within a democratic framework evoke considerable interest in practically all regions of the world as a wide range of countries experience raucous internal debates about the best policy tools for their own cohesive, inclusive progress. The civilizational depth and breadth make it possible for nearly all countries to find something in India to relate to and to find an easy comfort level. In the prevailing milieu of deepening strategic distrust among countries, this circumstance is a significant facilitator of a successful pursuit of our national strategic interests.[7,8]

Discussion

India is an enlightened nation with a vibrant soft power inheritance. The country is vividly conscious of the weight of its cultural engagement and requires putting in little more effort to present its culture fascinating to the corners of the world. The following notion of soft power is original and essentially natural which is harmonious with the abundant history of India as both a country of notions and thoughts alongside amicable cultural dissemination. Soft power brought with it an impression of upright hovering sphere and reliability, which motivated the developing nations across the world after seeing India's position. India has an optimistic vision of relatively pluralistic government, non-violent, and liberal with a non-threatening global leadership. Distinguished personages like Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, literature, music, dance, software industry, Ayurveda, etc., produce an extraordinary array of soft power assets that portray the attractiveness of India to the foreign populace. The importance of respect, harmony and fraternity are the essences that Indians are recognized for, with Ashoka, Buddha and Gandhi standing as principal representatives. Mythological epics such as Mahabharata and Ramayana are compared with the great Greek writings like Odyssey and Iliad. India was appreciated as the 'Golden Bird'

between 1 and 1000 AD for its GDP, which was also ahead of China back then. This eventually brought migrants, traders and invaders like 'Alexander the Great' to India. Over the centuries, India has granted shelter, religious and cultural freedom to Jews, Christians, Muslims and several other faiths. India's history and culture is her legacy to the world that displays the metamorphosis of India's chronicles, how India harmoniously assimilated different religions yet never lost track to its own culture and history.[9,10]

India's global representation is rooted in the idea of 'unity in diversity', contemplative of the wide collection of cultures and civilizations that remains to attract many across the world. The soft power rootlets move very deep. Appraisals of India's soft power draw traditional, religious, ethno-linguistic and constructive relations with other nations. Everything as a component of the Indian culture was fascinating for the outside world. India dedicated to gaining internationally through commerce and statecraft, apart from "soft" power. Upanishads delivered the notion of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' to the world and to India. Renowned ancient Indian philosopher, Chanakya's maneuvering to gain over adjacent powers by settlement and non-aggression arrangement and grants also demonstrates the significance of soft power in the ancient Indian statecraft. India has a vibrant and traditional history that has given rise to several academicians, intellectuals and scholars who have committed to the conception of distinct followings of knowledge, a pearl of wisdom that has travelled and set themselves far exceeding the frontiers of India. The ancient universities of India were the most prominent centers of cultural synergy and soft power, which drew a great number of scholars and learners from different parts of the world. India as a mystic civilization has interested academicians, scholars and people from various fields from parts of the globe to India, which also led to the emergence of various Indologists. Indian society and culture that encompasses Indian cuisines, religions, festivals, spirituality, yoga, movies and music have a more all-embracing impact on the global market, particularly in Asia, West Asia, Europe and Africa.[11,12]

India since for eras has undergone numerous conflicts through the ancient Indian kingdoms and rulers including the colonial British rule. And yet, India was exultant and proud of the passive-resistance mode in which the nation had gained freedom. When the

British came to India, Britain had 2% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and India had 20%. But in 1947 during Independence, when the British departed India, the GDP was the opposite way round. India was economically a very poor nation quickly after independence, completely swilled of its resources by a long-suffering colonial power of over three centuries. India despite its intrinsic roadblocks of severe hardship and diversity of the numerous cultures was broadly praised for having gained independence from the colonial rule and also for enduring up for the global South. The soft power of India has risen as the capability to connect, strengthen the connections and to fix the fractures shaped by history and politics. In the 1990s, India supported peaceful advancement and a good friendly policy towards its neighbors and the soft power to cater to India's foreign policy to support its legitimacy in South Asia.[13,14]

Results

A country as endowed as India with a rich ancient civilisation and with long innings of being a modern democratic nation since its independence, soft power comes across as an effective foreign policy tool. However, the thing about soft power is that it is as good as, how the resources are employed in a strategic manner and with a focus on gaining foreign policy objectives. Moreover, the notion of soft power in international relations is grossly misunderstood, about what qualifies as the soft power resources, and also about how these resources are used, and with what goals in mind. Long before the contemporary debates on what constitutes as soft power, commenced with the writings of American scholar Joseph S. Nye, kingdoms, small and large across the world, and modern nation-states, have experienced the use of culture, political system and external relations, to influence favourable outcomes. Ever since its independence from the yoke of British imperialism, India as a modern nation-state has expressed itself as an originator of ideas of global peace and stability, even while it was economically inept and was a recipient of foreign aid and assistance. Embarking on a democratic path, steered by a comprehensive constitutional compass, India even during the heydays of the Cold War, attempted to chart a third path of non-alignment, and provide a rudder for the developing countries and newly independent countries post decolonization.

In recent times, India's political and economic rise in the comity of nations has given new meanings to

India's soft power resources and its employment for protecting and promoting India's interest. The civilizational appeal of India and its cultural diversity means that India never ran short of soft power. From Indian dances and performing arts, historical monuments and epics, Indian cinema as well, the diversity of Indian food, it will be an understatement to discuss any element of India's soft power. However, with India's rising economic profile, new soft power resources has come to occupy relevance in India's foreign policy orientations, more specifically, India's foreign assistance to other developing countries, India's role in humanitarian and disaster relief operations and the attraction of India as a higher education hub for developing countries in Asia and Africa.[15,16]

India has been at the forefront of providing technical and professional training for developing countries, either unilaterally or in collaboration with like-minded countries. For instance, the international community, the government and the people of Afghanistan have welcomed India's pivotal role in the civilian reconstruction of Afghanistan since 2001, without interfering in the internal affairs of that country. Moreover, India has been offering a number of student scholarships in mutual consultation with recipient countries and India's increasing capability and capacity to contribute toward disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, as in the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 has been recognised. More recently, India's medical supply diplomacy during the coronavirus pandemic crisis has reached not only to neighbouring countries but also to any country, requesting supplies and assistance.[17,18]

Conclusion

India seems to qualify as a soft power by default with her democratic tradition, Mahatma Gandhi with his concept of non-violence and peaceful conflict mediation as national hero and Bollywood as a quasiglobal dream fabric. The high economic growth rates since the liberalisation in 1991 have increased India's international attractiveness. India uses her soft power capacities mainly for image building rather than as an instrument to exert influence. India can therefore be qualified as a defensive soft power that puts a stronger emphasis on its capacities rather than the capabilities. In contrast to the United States (US), the European Union (EU) and China, Indian foreign policy makers do not perceive their own political model as an attraction for others. It is regarded as an asset that is promoted to increase India's

attractiveness for foreign investors. Using the soft power capacities as a strategy would also require a domestic debate how to strike a balance between national interests, on the one hand, and political norms and values, on the other hand.[19,20]

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