

**SUBJECT: POLITICAL SCIENCE III**

**COURSE: BA LLB SEMESTER III**

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**MODULE: MODULE 14, INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY**

**Structure:**

- Definitions of foreign policy
- Determinants of India's Foreign Policy

## **INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY**

Foreign Policy is one of the wheels with which the process of international politics operates. So it is very essential to learn the concepts of foreign policies before deducting any conclusion in international politics. Foreign policy is not separate from national policy, instead, it is a part of it. It consists of national interests that are to be furthered in relation to other furthering national interests in their foreign policies within the limits of their strength and the realities of the external environment. In recent years, the term foreign policy has become so wide that it covers almost all sorts of relations of one government with the other. Obviously, then political relations also fall in the scope of foreign policy.

The term 'foreign policy' has been defined in a number of ways. George Modelski defines it as, "The system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment.

C.C Rodee defines foreign policy as a group of principles which are adopted by the states to protect the national interests and to change the behaviour of others.

In his own words, "Foreign policy involves the formulation and implementation of a group of principles which shape the behaviour pattern of a state while negotiating with (contacting) other states to protect or further its vital interests"

## **INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY - DETERMINANTS**

### **(a) Geography**

"India" is the English name of "Hindustan" were the people living beyond the first major natural barrier, the River Sindhu or Indus. Blessed with abundant water, sunshine and fertile land, protected by the seas to the South, virtually impassable mountain ranges to the North, thick forests to the East and deserts to the West, India was a self-contained, self-satisfied and rich civilisation (*sonay ki chidiya*) stretching from Punjab and Sindh to the Himalayas,

Bengal and the shores of the ocean. India was never an aggressive power since it had nothing to gain by making forays beyond its natural frontiers. Trade and cultural contacts across the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea were mostly peaceful interactions. The only threats and invasions India periodically faced were from marauders from the Northwest.

Thus, Indians developed a defensive mindset. They did not craft a strategy to tackle foreign threats. The limited problems of diplomacy and statecraft involved ambitious feuding rulers within the Indian sub-continent. India did not have clearly defined borders. Rather, it had frontier zones in the northwest, the Himalayas and the northeast. These were left alone, as long as they did not threaten the security of the heartland. Invariably, these zones had as extensive contacts with India as with areas on the other side viz. Afghanistan, Tibet and Burma.

In today's world, India's geography poses three principal foreign policy challenges. One, whereas the modern Indian state requires fixed, determinable borders, the inhabitants of these amorphous frontier zones have traditionally had, and do indeed need, flexible borders. Trying to demarcate a historically non-existent border gives rise to border disputes as, for example, with China. Two, today's political borders of South Asia are artificial. India has been divided in the past, but never so irrationally as it has been since 1947. India's neighbours want to keep their distance from India in order to assert and preserve their sovereignty. Thus they deliberately downplay their interdependence, complementarities and commonalities with India. At the same time, they can ignore neither the tugs of a shared history and culture, nor the compulsions of intertwined economic and social ties. Three, India is boxed in – by Pakistan on the west and Bangladesh on the east. Without their cooperation, India cannot meaningfully extend its overland reach and influence.

At the same time, India is very strategically located in the heart of Asia and dominates the Indian Ocean, which is named after India. It was from India (which the British regarded as 'the jewel in the crown') that the mighty British Empire controlled the whole of Asia. East Africa, the Arab world, Central Asia and Southeast Asia are all within easy reach of India. The main sea lines of communication in the Indian Ocean pass very close to India. The Persian Gulf, which is the principal source of exportable global oil and gas, is India's neighbour. Unfortunately, terrorism, fundamentalism, piracy and narcotics production are rampant in areas that surround India.

## **REFERENCES:**

Horimoto, Takenori. 2017. 'Explaining India's Foreign Policy: From Dream to Realization of Major Power,' *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 17: 3, pp. 463-496