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INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER MODI'S REGIME **(2014–2025): A STUDY**

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Abstract

The period from 2014 to 2025 marked a significant phase in India's foreign policy under the leadership of Narendra Modi. The government adopted a proactive and multidimensional diplomatic approach aimed at enhancing India's strategic, economic, and geopolitical influence globally. The study examines the major features, initiatives, and outcomes of India's foreign policy during this period, focusing on regional engagement, global partnerships, economic diplomacy, and strategic autonomy. Key initiatives such as the "Neighbourhood First Policy," the "Act East Policy," and the strengthening of strategic partnerships with global powers have reshaped India's role in international relations.

The research employs qualitative analysis using secondary data from academic articles, policy reports, and government publications. Findings indicate that India's foreign policy under Modi demonstrates a shift toward assertive diplomacy, multi-alignment, economic engagement, and the use of soft power tools such as cultural diplomacy and diaspora outreach. The study concludes that while the policy enhanced India's global stature and strengthened strategic partnerships, challenges remain in managing relations with neighboring countries and balancing global power dynamics.

Introduction

Foreign policy plays a crucial role in shaping a nation's global identity, national security, and economic development. Since independence in 1947, India has pursued a foreign policy guided by principles such as non-alignment, peaceful coexistence, and strategic autonomy. However, significant transformations occurred after 2014 when Narendra Modi assumed office as the Prime Minister of India.

The Modi government introduced a more assertive and dynamic diplomatic approach aimed at

increasing India's global influence. Unlike earlier phases that emphasized cautious diplomacy, the new approach focused on active engagement with major powers, strengthening regional partnerships, and promoting economic diplomacy. This period witnessed the emergence of new diplomatic strategies including the "Neighborhood First Policy," "Act East Policy," and deeper engagement with the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific region. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and regional organizations became important platforms for India's engagement.

One of the defining features of India's foreign policy under Modi has been **multi-alignment**, which allows India to maintain strong relations with multiple global powers simultaneously. Instead of adhering strictly to traditional non-alignment, India has strategically engaged with countries such as the United States, Russia, Japan, and European nations to advance its national interests. Another important dimension of this period is the emphasis on regional stability and connectivity. The government prioritized cooperation with neighboring countries including Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan through economic partnerships and infrastructure projects.

India also expanded its global outreach by strengthening relations with Middle Eastern countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. These efforts enhanced energy security, trade, and investment cooperation while improving India's strategic presence in the region. Furthermore, India's foreign policy during this period increasingly integrated economic initiatives such as the Make in India program to attract foreign investment and promote manufacturing growth. Thus, the period from 2014 to 2025 represents a transformative phase in India's diplomatic history. The present study analyzes the major features, strategies, and impacts of India's foreign policy under Modi's leadership.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to analyze India's foreign policy under the Modi regime between 2014 and 2025. The research is primarily based on secondary sources such as academic journals, government publications, policy documents, books, and credible online resources.

Data Collection

The data for this research was collected from:

1. Academic research papers and journals on international relations.

2. Government reports and policy documents related to Indian foreign policy.
3. Articles from reputable institutions and policy analysis platforms.
4. Books and scholarly works on Indian diplomacy and international relations.

Analytical Approach

The research uses descriptive and analytical methods to examine the major developments in India's foreign policy during the period under study. The study focuses on:

- Key foreign policy initiatives.
- Regional and global diplomatic engagement.
- Strategic and economic partnerships.
- Challenges and outcomes of policy implementation.

Scope and Limitations

The study focuses on major foreign policy initiatives between 2014 and 2025 and does not examine all diplomatic activities in detail. Due to reliance on secondary sources, the research depends on the interpretation and analysis of existing literature.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the major features of India's foreign policy under the Modi government from 2014 to 2025.
2. To analyze key initiatives such as the "Neighbourhood First Policy" and "Act East Policy."
3. To evaluate India's strategic partnerships with global powers.
4. To understand the role of economic diplomacy and trade in foreign policy.
5. To identify the challenges and achievements of India's foreign policy during this period.

Literature Review

Several scholars and policy analysts have examined the evolution of India's foreign policy under the Modi administration.

According to Dr. Parth Sharma, India's foreign policy under Modi reflects both continuity and change. While traditional principles such as strategic autonomy remain important, the Modi

government introduced new initiatives aimed at strengthening regional engagement and global partnerships.

Research articles analyzing India's foreign policy between 2014 and 2025 highlight the shift toward proactive diplomacy and strategic engagement with multiple global powers. These studies emphasize that India's diplomatic strategy increasingly focuses on economic cooperation, infrastructure connectivity, and regional stability.

Scholars also note that the "Neighbourhood First Policy" became a central pillar of India's foreign relations. The policy prioritizes strong relations with South Asian neighbors through economic cooperation, infrastructure development, and cultural exchanges.

Another important concept discussed in literature is **multi-alignment**, which refers to India's ability to maintain strategic relationships with multiple global powers simultaneously. This strategy allows India to maximize its geopolitical advantages while maintaining independence in decision-making.

Studies also emphasize the significance of the "Act East Policy," which aims to strengthen India's engagement with Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. The policy promotes trade, connectivity, and security cooperation with ASEAN countries and has significantly increased India-ASEAN trade relations.

Another area widely discussed in academic literature is India's expanding engagement with West Asia. Scholars highlight that Modi's diplomacy strengthened relations with Gulf countries through economic partnerships, energy cooperation, and diaspora engagement.

Overall, existing literature suggests that India's foreign policy under Modi represents a transition from traditional diplomacy toward a more dynamic and strategic global engagement.

Findings of the Study

1. Proactive and Assertive Diplomacy

One of the most significant changes in India's foreign policy under Modi has been the adoption of proactive diplomacy. The government increased high-level diplomatic visits and actively participated in international forums. This approach helped enhance India's visibility and influence in global affairs.

2. Neighbourhood First Policy

The "Neighbourhood First Policy" became a cornerstone of India's regional diplomacy. The policy aims to strengthen political, economic, and cultural relations with neighboring countries

including Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Maldives.

Through development assistance, connectivity projects, and humanitarian support, India has sought to establish itself as a reliable partner and regional leader.

3. Act East Policy

The “Act East Policy” was introduced to strengthen India’s engagement with Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. The policy emphasizes economic cooperation, infrastructure development, and maritime security.

Projects such as the India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway aim to improve connectivity and trade between India and Southeast Asian countries.

4. Multi-Alignment Strategy

India’s foreign policy during this period reflects a strategy of multi-alignment rather than strict non-alignment. India strengthened relations with multiple global powers including the United States, Russia, Japan, and European nations.

This approach allows India to maintain strategic autonomy while maximizing diplomatic and economic opportunities.

5. Strengthening Global Partnerships

India strengthened its strategic partnerships with major global powers through defense cooperation, trade agreements, and technological collaboration. The country also played an active role in international organizations and multilateral forums.

6. Economic Diplomacy

Economic diplomacy became a key component of India’s foreign policy. Initiatives such as the Make in India program were used to attract foreign investment and strengthen economic ties with other countries.

Trade agreements and infrastructure connectivity projects also contributed to expanding India’s global economic engagement.

7. Soft Power Diplomacy

India effectively used soft power to strengthen its global image. Cultural initiatives such as International Yoga Day and diaspora engagement played an important role in promoting India’s cultural heritage and strengthening international relations.

8. Challenges and Limitations

Despite significant achievements, India's foreign policy during this period also faced several challenges, including:

- Border tensions with China.
- Fluctuating relations with Pakistan.
- Strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Balancing relations with rival global powers.

These challenges highlight the complexities of India's diplomatic environment in an increasingly multipolar world.

Conclusion

India's foreign policy under the leadership of Narendra Modi from 2014 to 2025 represents a significant transformation in the country's diplomatic strategy. The government adopted a proactive and multidimensional approach aimed at enhancing India's global influence, economic partnerships, and strategic autonomy.

Key initiatives such as the "Neighbourhood First Policy," the "Act East Policy," and the strategy of multi-alignment have reshaped India's foreign relations and strengthened its position in global politics. Economic diplomacy, infrastructure connectivity, and soft power initiatives have further contributed to India's growing international presence.

However, India continues to face challenges in managing complex geopolitical dynamics and regional conflicts. Nevertheless, the Modi era marks an important phase in India's foreign policy evolution, characterized by dynamic diplomacy and increasing global engagement.

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