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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal providededicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

# **INDIA'S REGIONAL POLICY AIMED AT ESTABLISHING ALLIANCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**AUTHORED BY - SHIVAM KUMAR PANDEY & RIDAY MUKHERJEE**

## **ABSTRACT**

In terms of India's national development, economic growth, water security, and sustainable security, the Arctic is crucial. Aside from that, the monsoon provides 70% of India's yearly rainfall, making it a heavily dependent agricultural region. As a result of sea level rise, changes in the Arctic related to glacier melting will have a significant effect on the nation's economic security. Furthermore, summer crops like rice, soy beans, and pulses—which produce about half of the nation's food—are impacted by climate change and ocean warming. Sea level rise will also have an effect on the sustainability of some 1300 island nations and marine animals. The six pillars that support India's Arctic Policy encompasses the following areas: science and research, national capacity building, economic and human development, transportation and connectivity, climate and environmental protection, and international involvement and governance. The policy seeks to advance scientific research, comprehend the effects of climate change, improve economic relations Considering the Arctic, get ready for modifications to international shipping lanes brought on by ice melting, foster international collaboration, and develop domestic capacity. The objectives are to stop changes in climate, save the surroundings, and create a partnership for long-term growth that includes industry, business, university, and the research community. India's programme also places a strong emphasis on working with Arctic nations to develop clean and green industries, use resources, and generate green energy. Denmark and India have established a strategic alliance that aims to collaborate on topics including renewable energy, waste management, pollution control, and green technologies. Not many Indian private companies have made large financial commitments to the Arctic. On the other hand, the Arctic Strategy encourages Indian businesses to become members of the Arctic Economic Council and participate in the five working groups that it has established: responsible resource development, investment and infrastructure, maritime transport, connectivity, and the blue economy) and apply for membership. India wishes to take a responsible stance when establishing alliances with Arctic

countries, keeping in mind its obligations to the world, the significant environmental consequences, and the worries of the indigenous people.

**Keywords: Arctic, Policy, Monsoon, Infrastructure, Economic Council, Maritime, Renewable Energy.**

## INTRODUCTION

India signed the Svalbard Treaty in Paris in February 1920, marking the beginning of its relationship with the Arctic. India set off on its first scientific trip in 2007 to begin research in the fields of geology, atmospheric sciences, and Arctic microbiology. Himadri, the nation's first research station, was subsequently devoted to India in 2008 and located in Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard. With the exception of China, India is the only developing country with an Arctic research station. Ind Arc, the country of In Kongsfjorden, Svalbard, in 2014, the nation of India installed its first multi-sensor moored observatory. Additionally, in 2016, India established its northernmost atmospheric laboratory at Gurbadet. Indian scientists are comparing the mass balance of Himalayan and Arctic glaciers by examining the former's characteristics.

The Arctic association of the interconnected polar programme, which includes activities in the Himalayas, the Arctic, and the Antarctic, includes India. Given its observer position in the Arctic Council, India can use the territory to investigate ways to fortify its economy and develop a footprint. India may gain from its sustainable Arctic policy in a number of ways. India may benefit from lower shipping company prices, as well as lower expenses for time, fuel, and security while transporting commodities via the Northern Sea Route. Considering the two nations' ties, China's ability to access India's economic growth may be hampered by the Arctic via the Northern Sea Route.

Due to the possible effects of effects of climate change on India's economy and the global economy, opinions regarding India's participation in the Arctic are split. The Arctic's fossil fuel extraction industry is the source of this worry because an explicit Arctic plan has not yet been developed. Furthermore, the need for India to have a clear and long-term Arctic strategy is highlighted by the possible environmental effects of Arctic mining. However, India's scientific and diplomatic involvement in the Arctic may prove advantageous. India can undertake scientific study and expeditions maintaining the safety, stability, and security of the Arctic for sustainable development,



with the help of a team of informed environmentalists. This strategy brings in a fresh viewpoint with Asian involvement and harmonises East policy Act of India with countries like Korea, Japan, and Singapore.

## **THE NECESSITY OF AN ARCTIC POLICY**

Three main categories can be used to illustrate why the Arctic is relevant to India:

- (a) Economic and Human Resources;
  - (b) Climate Change, Science, and Environment; and
  - (c) Geopolitical and Strategic.
- (a) **Environmental Impact, Climate Change, and Scientific Research**

### **i. Monsoon Season:**

Although the extent of the Arctic's alterations is yet unknown, it is certain that they have had an effect on ecosystems, weather patterns, and world temperatures—including India's monsoon season. More than 70% of India's yearly precipitation falls during the monsoons. Agriculture, which provides the majority of income for more than 58% of India's population and significantly contributes to the GDP of the nation, is directly reliant on the monsoon season.

### **ii. Elevated Ocean Level:**

The Arctic's Sea ice and snow cover declined between 1971 and 2019 by 21% and 43%, respectively, resulting in a net loss of land ice in all regions of the Arctic. The Arctic's declining land ice cover is a major factor in the rise in global sea levels and might have a big effect on India, particularly given its 1,300 island countries and waterways.

### **iii. The Himalayas:**

Despite their different physical locations, the Himalayas and the Arctic have similar issues and worries. The melting of the Arctic is making it easier to understand the glacier melt in the Himalayas, the "third pole" with the world's greatest freshwater reserves after the North and South Poles. Furthermore, they provide the water for major Indian rivers like the Brahmaputra and Ganga, whose basins sustain populations of over 177 million and 600 million, respectively, and provide over 40% of the country's GDP. Thus, it is imperative that Indian experts conduct study in the Arctic.

## **(b) Human and Economic Resources**

### **i. Hydrocarbons and Mineral Resources:**

The Arctic region contains significant quantities of zinc, lead, placer gold, quartz, and abundant deposits of coal, gypsum, and diamonds. Greenland alone contains over 25% of the world's reserves of uncommon earth elements. Hydrocarbon resources abound in the Arctic as well. A US Geological Survey (USGS) analysis states, the Arctic "may constitute the geographically largest unexplored prospective area for petroleum remaining on Earth," representing 30% of the undiscovered natural gas and 13% of the undiscovered oil in the world. The increasing amount of ice melting has made these resources easier to obtain and more feasible to harvest. India is third globally in terms of energy consumption, third in terms of oil imports (83%), and fourth in terms of petrol imports, which account for about half of all petrol use. India has one of the lowest petrol mixes in the world, with only 6% of the total energy basket, whereas the global average is 24%. By 2030, this is supposed to be increased to 15%. Therefore, the Arctic may be able to help India with its lack of strategic and minerals with rare earth elements in addition to its demands for energy security.

## **(c) Geopolitical and Strategic**

### **1) China:**

The geopolitical climate is becoming more heated than it has been due to the melting of Arctic ice, following the conclusion of the Cold War. In January 2018, China produced a White Paper on Arctic policy, referring to itself as a "Near-Arctic State". Additionally, it designated trans-Arctic maritime routes serving as the Belt and Road Initiative's third transportation corridor (BRI) by referring to them as the Polar Silk Road. The US has fiercely disputed China's claim, destroying China's position in the Arctic and asserting that "there are only Arctic States and Non-Arctic States." China has no rights whatsoever by saying that there is a third category.

### **2) Russia:**

Russia has a large amount of land, a coastline, a population, significant mineral resources, and hydrocarbons makes up over half of the Arctic. Despite making up only 1.5% of Russia's total population, the Russian Arctic contributes 15% of the nation's GDP and 20% of its exports. In absolute terms, Russia appears to have the most stakes in the Arctic. Russia is looking for finance and cooperation to expand infrastructure in the face of sanctions along the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and in the Arctic. The US opposes Russia's view that some areas of the North Korean Sea are domestic

seas, which it controls for merchant ships and prohibits access for foreign warships. The US, China, and Russia, along with NATO, are vying for influence and position in the region as a result of the opening of trade routes and the potential for expanded resource extraction. 2018 saw the greatest exercises since the Cold War by Vostok and Trident Juncture, respectively, represent Russia and NATO. China took part in the former, but Sweden, Finland, and all 29 NATO allies (at the time) participated in the latter, which also saw the US Navy's first use of an aircraft carrier since 1991 above the Arctic Circle. May 2018 saw the US reestablish the 2nd Fleet; it had been disbanded in September 2011. The fleet was first formed in 1950 to oppose North Atlantic naval forces of the Soviet Union.

### **3) Boundary Conflicts:**

The Arctic States cannot agree upon a boundary, aside from the strategic contestation. For example, The United States, Canada, and Russia all share a continental shelf, yet each country has its own claims to a different continental shelf. The US and Canada disagree on the North West Passage, which part of its Canada views as its internal waters (much like Russia does for the NSR), and they have not yet established their maritime borders. There's also the dispute over Hans Island between Denmark and Canada.

## **INDIA'S APPROACH'S GAPS**

### **1. Absence of a Clearly Stated Policy:**

The Arctic interests of India are listed as "scientific, environmental, commercial as well as strategic" by the Indian government's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), but until recently, Three Arctic Council observers included India without a nationally declared Arctic Policy.

### **2. Scientific Approach:**

In the Arctic, India must go beyond a strictly scientific approach. Given its increasing prominence and resulting influence in global affairs, India should be more qualified to comprehend the intricacies of Arctic geopolitics and governance.

### **3. Inadequate Funding:**

The Cryosphere and Polar Science Division of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (PACER) programme now provides funding for polar research in India, specifically in the Antarctic, Arctic, Southern Ocean, and Himalayas (MoES). For the fiscal years 2019, 20, and 21st of October, 2018 the total

financial allocation (BE) under the PACER initiative was Rs 365 crores. The amount allotted to India's Arctic programme is believed to be close to Rs 10–15 crores annually, given that the country's programme for the Antarctic is almost five times bigger than the programme for the Arctic.

#### **4. Arctic Research Vessel (PRV):**

One major obstacle to the expansion of India's arctic activities is the absence of a specialised PRV. The Economic Affairs Cabinet Committee of India authorised the purchase of a PRV on October 29, 2014, at an expense of Rs 1,051.13 crore over a 34-month period. The ship has not yet been exposed to daylight. The influence of scientific research undertaken in the Arctic and India's strategic relevance were Recognised in 2021 by the Environment, Forests, and Climate Parliamentary Standing Committee.

A request was made to the MoES to "prepare a realistic plan for its expansion in the next five years, including capital expenditure for the acquisition of polar research vessel" in addition to noting China's investment in these regions. The principal organisation behind India's Arctic studies and polar research effort, is currently the MoES-affiliated National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR). The MEA acts as the Arctic Council's external contact on behalf of the United Nations Economic & Social (UNES) Division. The eight Arctic Council members are split across the Americas, Eurasia, and Central Europe divisions, which may hinder regional attention to the rapidly shifting geophysical and geopolitical conditions in the Arctic. Additionally, there isn't a central organisation to oversee all of the actions taken by the Indian government in relation to the Arctic.

#### **5. Awareness and Capacity:**

Due to its remote location and lack of direct influence on India, the Arctic has received little attention in that country. As a result, the country lacks capability to handle Arctic concerns. India must increase its own capability and capacity as the Arctic opens up by establishing a broad institutional foundation on Arctic governance, legal, social, environmental, and marine concerns. Only by including curricula on the Arctic into our educational system at every level will this be possible. The foundation of India's Arctic commitment must be a sensible increase in its own capabilities.

# THE ARCTIC POLICY OF INDIA

India's proposed Arctic policy, "India's Arctic Policy: Building a Partnership for Sustainable Development," was made public for public comment on December 31, 2020. The Policy is a 24-page document that is organised into eight segments that are based on six pillars. India's Arctic ambitions will be widely disseminated thanks to the simultaneous publishing of a Hindi translation of the Policy. The following are the six pillars of Policy:

- Research and Science
- Cooperation for Human and Economic Development
- Protection of the Environment and Climate
- Connectivity and Transportation
- International Cooperation and Governance
- Building National Capacity

## DOES INDIA FILL THE GAPS IN ITS ARCTIC POLICY?

### 1) Scientific Attitude:

India's Arctic Policy has transcended the strictly scientific methodology used previously. The six pillars cover every area of the Arctic that is pertinent to India: its environment and climate change, its people and economy, and its geopolitical and strategic concerns, even if the major focus is still science. This would probably allow for a more comprehensive strategy and broaden India's participation in the Arctic.

### 2) Funding:

The Guidelines states that the provision of necessary resources will determine how it is implemented. The goal is to substantially boost financial assistance for India's Arctic research projects by fostering a more multidisciplinary approach to the region. Polar Research Vessel: The Arctic Policy's stated goal of obtaining a specific Icebreaker lessons Indian Arctic Programme will gain speed and the process will be accelerated by the Polar Research Vessel.

### 3) The entirety of Government Focus:

An interministerial Empowered Arctic Policy Group (EAPG) would act as the system of oversight and management for the Action Plan, which will carry out the goals set forth in the Arctic Policy of

India. The Policy further stipulates that academic institutions and other stakeholders must the research community, business, and industry, will be involved in the implementation process, which will be based on timetables and activity prioritisation. This framework will probably help the Indian government do better analysis, forecast, and coordinated action. It will also help the region's policies be more coherent and better serve India's economic, military, and strategic objectives.

#### **4) Consciousness and Ability:**

In line using the "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" idea, India's Arctic policy aims to build a strong institutional, human, and financial foundation. The Policy also aims to broaden the pool of expertise in fields including exploration of minerals, oil, and gas, blue-bio economy, and tourism associated to the Arctic as well as to increase the nation's capability and knowledge of scientific research linked to the region. The Policy's objectives in the maritime sector are to increase seafarers' training in polar and ice navigation, develop hydrographic capacity specific to a given region, increase the number of Indians qualified in maritime insurance, chartering, arbitration, and brokerage, and build indigenous shipbuilding capacity meeting ice class standards. Along with studying Arctic marine, governance, legislation, social issues, and the environment concerns, it also aims to establish broad institutional capacity for applying the Arctic region regulation accords, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Increased governmental and academic specialisation in the Arctic and increased public awareness of the region are the two main objectives of India's Arctic Policy.

### **ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS**

#### **1) Connectivity:**

The melting of Arctic ice and the region's location, which guarantees the shortest sea distance connecting North East Asia, Europe, and America, are expected to change world maritime trade, which is currently carried out via the Suez Canal and the Malacca Strait. With the opening of Arctic trade routes, the ports of China, South Korea, and Japan in North East Asia stand to benefit the most which will save a significant amount of money and time. In times of conflict, in addition, China's Malacca dilemma would be greatly alleviated, and India's ensuing strategic maritime advantage would require reevaluation in order to cut off Chinese trade via the Indian Ocean.

India's Arctic Policy aims to connect the Russian Unified Deep-Water System (UDWS) extending it to the Arctic through the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). More so than East-

West connectivity, it notes, this might lead to a decrease in shipping costs as well as the general development of native people and the hinterland. It's crucial to remember that as part of the BRI, China has dubbed the trans-Arctic shipping routes the Polar Silk Road. The goal of linking INSTC and UDWS is praiseworthy; it has the potential to release over US\$ 250 billion in trade potential and to usher in much-needed development, wealth, peace, and stability in the areas it travels through. Additionally, this will offer up new avenues for connectivity-related collaboration with Russia. The progress of INSTC has been acknowledged in multiple joint declarations between Russia and India, and has been brought up by both President Putin and Prime Minister Modi. According to research conducted through the India-based Federation of Freight Forwarders Association (FFFAI), the INSTC has the capacity to transport 30–50 million tonnes of cargo annually and is 30% less expensive and 40% shorter than the existing traditional route. India is looking to increase the number of participants in this project and has also suggested adding the port of Chabahar to the INSTC. The Delhi Declaration, which was released subsequent to the 27 January 2022 meeting between the five countries of Central Asia and India, endorsed India's proposition to incorporate the Chabahar Port, encouraged the other Central Asian nations to contemplate becoming members of INSTC, and acknowledged Turkmenistan's suggestion to incorporate the Turkmenbashi Port under the auspices of INSTC.

## **2) Method of Contestation:**

By emphasising the areas where collaboration is beneficial, India's Arctic Policy has correctly minimised the growing rivalry and conflict between great powers in the Arctic. This contrasts sharply with China's admission of itself as a state near the Arctic, which frightened all Arctic states.

## **CONCLUSION**

Being among the first the Svalbard Treaty, which replaced the Spitsbergen Treaty in February 1920, was signed by high contracting parties. Namibia has a history dating back more than a century with the Arctic. Even now, the Treaty grants Indian citizens of Svalbard the freedom to enter the country without a visa and to engage in business and commerce. With the 2008 dedication of the 55 Indian research station "Himadri" at with the exception of China, Ny-Ålesund, India is now the only developing country with an Arctic research facility.. The timing of India's Arctic Policy is appropriate, since it will probably give policymakers in the country guidance on the specifics of India's engagement in the area. It is the initial phase in creating an all-encompassing government strategy for

India's involvement in the area. A more concentrated and synergistic scientific research, including a better knowledge of the connections between polar studies and the Himalayas and the Arctic monsoon and climate change, is anticipated as a result of the policy.

Nevertheless, there are certain shortcomings in India's Arctic Policy, including finance, polar research vessels, scientific orientation with a knowledge of geopolitics and governance, awareness and competence, and general Indian government focus. India's recently adopted Arctic Policy aims to close these gaps by including a variety of additional factors into its six pillars, in addition to a concentration on scientific research. The Arctic Policy's goal of obtaining an India's hopes in the Arctic will be strengthened and the process accelerated by an ice-class polar research ship.

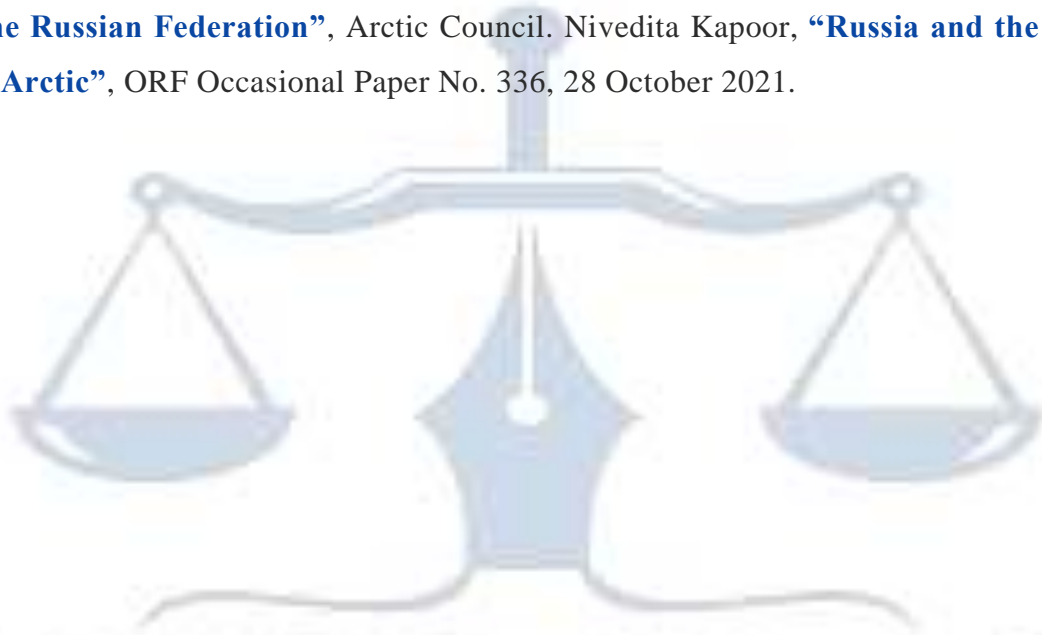
The Policy states that the allocation of required resources will serve as the foundation for the Policy's implementation. The adoption of a more interdisciplinary approach to the Arctic is anticipated to greatly boost financial support for India's Arctic research projects. The Policy's economic strategy is anticipated to facilitate the entry of Indian firms into the region and provide them with access to clean and environmentally sustainable technologies. The vast geographical distances and established communities in the Arctic can be bridged by India's experience in the space and e-commerce industries. Greater and more varied interaction with the Arctic region will result from the development of indigenous capacities there. Through the organisation of workshops, seminars, and events both in The Policy is anticipated to enhance understanding of the Arctic between India and the Arctic and vice versa. It would also enhance India's ability to research Arctic governance and geopolitics, while also showcasing the country's interest the remainder of the world in the area.

India's Arctic Policy is deftly combined, intricately intertwined, and cohesive with the government of India's overall policy framework. India is a part of the global family and is willing to "play its part and contribute to the global good" in keeping with the civilizational philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. This is most evident in India's inclusive and participatory Arctic Policy. Thus, both the international community and India's Arctic aspirations benefit from the announcement of the country's Arctic Policy.



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