



## INDIA'S POLICIES TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN

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### Abstract

*India has become more concerned regarding the strategic importance of Afghanistan since 2001 as a foreign policy tool. India uses soft power to gain influence in Afghanistan. Culture, ideology and institutions are examples of soft power, while physical resources such as military power and economic strength are examples of hard power. Investing billions on infrastructure, mostly in Afghanistan, has helped India achieve positive results and generate good will.*

*Indian participation in the emerging political structure in Afghan was quick after the dawn of the Taliban rule in 2001. The multifaceted engagement brought India closer to Afghanistan. During Afghan reconstruction, India used a soft power strategy. According to India's policy in Afghanistan, the aim was to support the arising democratic rule and prevent the Taliban from returning. Four factors motivate India's engagement in Afghanistan.*

*This study aims to assess the role Afghanistan plays in Indian foreign policy. In enchantment procedure towards Afghanistan, it represents a smooth-potential approach and a longstanding aim. Due to its importance to India's foreign policy in its neighbourhood, energy security and regional security are New Delhi's highest priorities.*

**Keywords:** *India, Afghanistan, Indo- Taliban, soft power, hard power, 2001, The Heart of Asia, current policy, significance.*



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## Introduction

India and Afghanistan share a rigid ancient and old cultural educational relationship. The close educational connection between India and Afghanistan breaks with an end of the Great Silk Road. The Silk Road, at the old end, was a succession of relevant labour roads connecting Asia and Europe. This Silk Road not only strengthened professional links between nations and domains, but also an illuminating interplay between people. (Joshi, 2011).

For example: In the time of Emperor Ashoka, Buddhism spread laterally along the Silk Road via Kashmir to Afghanistan and Central Asia, and lastly landed in China. Genghis Khan used this to expand the Mongol Empire in the 13th century. The Great Silk Road existed from the 2nd century B.C. to the 16th century AD. It owes its name to the first transit trade product – Chinese silk. The Chinese Han Dynasty was the first to use of the Silk Road in the second century BC. Thereafter, successor empires in the region used the path and then became bigger, such as the Roman Empire, the Kushan Empire to the Mughal Empire. (Joshi, 2011).

India and Afghanistan shared borders when they were under the British Empire until the 1940s. After India's independence, the relationship only grew stronger, this is due to the country's geographical location. Unlike India, Afghanistan is surrounded by land on all four sides, making it better known for its economy and ethnic diversity. Because of Pakistan's politically active role, Afghanistan has endured vital to India's defense and power dominance in the region, despite sharing no borders with them. Religious exchanges between Afghanistan, India, China and Central Asia are various other medium that builds ties. Buddhism spread from India to China via Central Asia. Islam came to India with an enormous contribution from the Central Asian countries. Even today, the cultural religious heritage is abundantly visible.

### **The Indo – Taliban saga**

But everything was put to the test when the Taliban took over Afghanistan in 1996. Almost every country in the world except Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia opposed the Taliban. India immediately cancelled all of its Afghanistan-related missions in Kabul in September 1996. The Taliban are generally a violent Islamic militia. The relationship worsened when the Taliban destroy a 12-meter-tall sleeping Buddha statue located in Tajikistan. This led to major riots and protests in both countries (Rahul Bedi,2002). In 1999, India briefly interacted with the Taliban on December 24 hijacking and takeover of the Indian Airlines flight. It lasted another 8 days as it only ended after Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh in person delivered the three Afghan militants held in prison in barter for the passengers (Peerzada,2012). This bad relationship was ended by the US coalition when a temporary government was formed in Afghanistan and Hamid Karzai was appointed its President (The Bonn Agreement,2012). India once again became an integral part of Afghanistan's political fabric as their relations became multidimensional. India resumed all of its missions in Kabul.

**India's commitment to Afghanistan is inspired by four distinct considerations.** (Pant,147)

- 1) India sees Afghanistan as an imaginable display. It has invested heavily in Afghanistan foundation development, advanced strengthening of local markets, and kept tabs on 300 million Afghan consumer incomes. (Schott, 111).
- 2) India's engagement in Afghanistan is characterized by its interest in complementing its potential beginnings to explore Central Asian oils and minerals. (Ibid) The excellent calculated significance of Afghanistan as an ocean floor by continent middle from two points South Asia on the individual help on one side and Central Asia on the other side (Cited in Ahmad, 77-80).
- 3) The third objective must be the containment of Pakistan. Pakistan has always sought strategic depth in the political concerns between India and Afghanistan (Pant, 2011).
- 4) To contain the extremely vulnerable border between Pakistan and Afghanistan and prevent the Taliban from taking power. The threat of the Taliban returning to power is a major concern for India (Nye,2004).

### **Soft Power Politics**

Power is the strength to take belongings accomplished. It is a capacity to establish possible choice do what you concede possibility do. Power (capacity) can be classified into two types: Hard power and Soft Power (Hymans,2011).

**Hard Power:** Hard capacity is a forcible force while compassionate capacity maybe about all different. Hard capacity is had connection with military substance or use of force (Hymans, 2009). When capacity is used to compel or encourage remainder of something it is proverb as hard capacity. Generally, the business-related inducements and military wealth are considered as Hard Power. The concrete capacity possessions like military wealth and economic ability authorize Hard Power. Here people are forced to move in a certain direction. The source used for accusations and threats is currency. Sheer brute force is used, and sometimes even with the help of military intervention and economic sanctions (Ernest, 2008)

**Soft Power:** Soft capacity largely resources a potential bewitched by a state or non-state player through authenticate allure influence to interest and religion. In other words, it is the potential to demonstrate advantages cultivates expected associated with obscured capacity money in the way that sophistication, beliefs and organizations (Nye, 2004). Soft capacity is the talent to form others do what you want on the support of in what way or manner they visualize you (Hymans, 2009). The beginnings of compassionate capacity are the attraction of an economic sophistication, governmental ethics and procedures (Nye, 2004). It is the way of co-opting

others in your direction. It's the process of getting things done in an indirect way. Soft power attracts and influences others with the way you present yourself and with your values.

But the concept and purpose of soft power has changed significantly over the years. Until Joseph Nye coined the term soft power, numerous scientists and scholars have expanded its definitions and added many aspects to it. For example: The terms such as exchange program, foreign aid and financial aid were included late (Patryk Kugiel,2012).

### **Indian nation policies on Afghanistan post 2001**

Indian nation policies on Afghanistan are guided by a wide range of interests. They are,

1. Comprises the arise in the Islamic Fundamentalism of the region.
2. To create an Independent, Peaceful and united Afghanistan.
3. Long lasting and long-term international engagement.
4. The region on trade and energy has a strong economic relationship.

### **Soft Power Policies of India in Afghanistan**

Completely in contrast to the policy of the 1990s when India followed the Hard Power Policy by supporting the Northern Alliance. But of late India is taking a dynamic and energetic approach through collaborative means. India decided not to engage in any armed force approaches then also to stay away from hard power policies against Afghanistan.

Ever since the decline of Taliban in 2001, India has shown great interest and support towards the formation of new Democracy. India has been undertaking a vital and significant role in the replotting and infrastructural developing of the country. India is Afghanistan's biggest donor as they have signed a number of agreements and developmental projects (Ashley,).

### **India's infrastructure contributions to Afghanistan**

The contributions are listed as follows;

- 1) The \$80 million project to build a 280km road linking the Afghan and Iraqi borders (Khalid, 2011).
- 2) The famous Salma Dam could only be rebuilt with Indian help (Khalid, 2011).
- 3) India is involved in the process of training the Afghan army soldiers and cop (Purushothaman,2010).
- 4) The Afghanistan Parliament building is also constructed by India (smith, 2012).
- 5) One of the largest children's hospitals in Afghanistan is operated by India (Pant, 2009).

- 6) The Indian films are the main source of entertainment for Afghanistan (Prakash Katoch, 2013).

Some pundits have criticized India's failure to supply army troops to Afghanistan. Due to the fact that Afghans have never opted for army troops and are slightly anti-democratic, this act seems impractical. Even if this is done against all odds, the troops will have to be sent through Pakistan, which is almost impossible and certainly not contemplated.

### **Business Interest on Afghanistan**

The largest Indian business venture in Afghanistan is the victorious tender for the construction of Indian private and public sector companies useful for the development of Hijack ore mining industry, valued at approximately US\$6.6 million. This construction requires investment from the Government of India, which is now controlled by the STEEL AUTHORITY OF INDIA (SAIL), which has assured to construct a mine, a 6-million-ton steel unit and an 800 MW power plant that would steel around Worth \$3.3 billion, and according to the World Bank, Afghanistan's GDP in 2011, inflated by the existence of huge numbers of ISAF troops, was \$20 billion.

There are about hundreds of Indian companies that have invested in Afghanistan since 2011. The percentage failure of investment sector is 43% in service sector, 41% in construction sector and 16% in industry sector. About 80 joint ventures have been set up by Indo-Afghan venture with total initial investment of about US\$20 million. Supplied steel and iron ore must be transported across Iran to India either by road or by an unfinished railroad. The Indian government is concerned about funding the construction of this railroad linking Chabahar an Iran's port with Afghanistan. India must walk a fine line in its commitment with Iran lest it draw very much scolding from the United States, y it appears that it plans to use Iran for the transition for now (Economic links between India and Afghanistan).

### **Ancient Significance of Afghanistan - India's Foreign Policy**

In liaison agreements with nations, archival-enlightening practices always help to design a helpful space within the framework of the liaison. The friendship betwixt India and Afghanistan is ancient and extensive. The time when old pioneering notion was recognizable through a professional connection that reinforced Enlightenment-classical connections, the post-pioneering globalized time is forcing the domain to modernize its connections again, awaiting the aid of strategic equation to realize its own public hope; let it be governmental, geo political strategic, business or military. With its geo political strategic proximity to Central

Asia, Pakistan and Iran, Afghanistan has become the extremely attracted country in India's local foreign policy. Also, India was the first non-Communist country to provide leadership for a later Soviet Union in conquering of Afghanistan in 1979. Aside from the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, India supported the leadership in Kabul. India, along with Russia and Iran, also boosted the non-Pashtun Rabbani forces that opposed the Taliban government in Afghanistan. India rendered combat hardware, mechanics and healing support to Northern Alliance forces bordering Tajikistan. India is also launching a healing aid in Farkhor on the Afghan-Tajik border to support healing aid for the soldiers (Adnan and Fatima, 2015).

India's freedom appeal in Afghanistan began after 1999 the hijacking of Indian flight IC-184 operated by Indian Airlines from Kathmandu to Kandahar in southern Afghanistan by Pakistani terrorists. The hijackers are financed and prepared for a Taliban. India has seemingly located the very first foreign air force base, Ayni Dushanbe, in Tajikistan to protect air travel to Europe. At the time of Taliban regime in Afghanistan, India knew many safety warnings amid the rise of Islamic militant troops in the Kashmir Basin, which boosted India to back the US-surpassed War on Disorder in Afghanistan in the way of intelligence recommendations. Overthrowing Taliban management surpassed India to engage vigorously in restoring Afghanistan's works (Sachdeva, 2016).

### **The Role of India After Terrorism in Afghanistan**

India played a critical role in restoring a war-torn Afghanistan. India's New Delhi and Afghanistan's Kabul have been proactive in promoting economic development and the living standards of their people, which will bring stability.

Under ability growth projects, India awards yearly scholarships to Afghan students wishing to educate in Indian universities, amounting to nearly 1000 per year. India also works closely with Afghanistan in the agricultural sector.

In order to innovate the agricultural sector, India supports scholarships for the Afghan citizens to increase knowledge about agricultural sector. At the field of communications and connectivity, India has implemented projects to build a bridge between 11 interim capitals nationwide with the telecommunications network and a television network. A power line for excess power supply was also built betwixt Uzbekistan and Kabul (Kumar,2013).

On building-based projects, India has finished the construction of the Afghan Parliament constructing, the Salma Dam in Herat province and a 220-kilometre road

connecting Afghanistan to Iran's port of Chabahar. In addition, India has distributed aircraft, buses and other vehicles for development and growth projects in Afghanistan (Kumar,2013).

All of the projects were carried out in Afghan border areas. India had also engaged in construction schools, colleges, nursing homes, drilled wells and supplying biscuits, grain etc. all of these actions made Afghanistan to consider India as an intimate country with its own government. Afghanistan promoted New Delhi's commitment to reconstruction and renovate projects across the nation. Karzai, former President of Afghanistan, often praises India as a loyal friend” (Kamboj,2013).

### **“The Heart of Asia”**

India has an old friendship that accompanies Afghanistan by sharing every other culture accepted. India has affirmed Afghanistan's crack to remain a calm and happy self-governing nation. Furthermore, India's increasing strides in Central Asia by targeted computes of the highest financial, energetic and military support has helped bring two areas together. This has additionally deepened the Afghan determinant bond between two nations as they share common interests and concerns in this area. It is also part of many local forums and conversations about Afghanistan. The Istanbul Process is named as “The Heart of Asia Process’s specifically a territorial conversation about Afghanistan made up of member states such as India, China, Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Western nations alongside the United Nation are still proponents of this process. The Heart of Asia Process is taking measures to combat disorder and drugs. This still deals with financial aspects of growth, in addition to teaching, regional establishment and responding to open problems. This support includes a range of security building activities by each of the appendage nations (Embassy of India, Kabul 2019).

SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), SAARC, etc. are some territorial arrangements where two nations jointly share a floor accompanying additional provincial nations. Moreover, India is resisting its premature stance and has agreed to accompany the Taliban in cheerful negotiations on Afghanistan's future stability.

### **Current India Policy Approach to Afghanistan**

India's current policy on Afghanistan reflects its increasing data with the Central Asian nations and Iran. In addition, Afghanistan's current support and protection scenario is very weak. The trouble over a friendly change of power through constitutional channels, periodic

failed bargaining's with the Taliban, ongoing Taliban arsonist attacks and the appearance of ISIS in Afghan have terrorize and greatly convoluted Afghanistan's support and protection (Kugelman,2019).

The capital of India- New Delhi strengthened its ties with Kabul and trusted in working with the United State on the one hand and like-minded countries in other regions on the other to tackle support and enhance protection in the region. India is involved in both dual and multi stage commitment in Afghan. At the multidimensional level, Indian nation is the part Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Ashgabat Agreement, the India-Central Asia Dialogue and the Heart of Asia Conference (Kaura, 2017). Indian nation approach to Afghan includes regional support and protection to promote relatedness and wealth for the greater scope.

### **Conclusion**

The friendship between India and Afghanistan is multifaceted (signed a friendship treaty in 1950). Qualified is clearly a military and protective aspect under which India seeks cohesion within Afghanistan. India has opted for a soft power approach to Afghanistan. India has complicated happened in various reconstruction and development projects. India's soft capacity approach has brought good will to India. India has had a benevolent influence on the ordinary Afghanistan people through attractive humane aid. Indian nation aid organizations have already raised US\$2 billion, positioning themselves as the first country in the ranking of provincial aid in Afghan. In spite of many warnings and attacks, New Delhi had pledged to continue helping the people of Afghanistan should incidents arise. Anyhow, there are friendly and business data including Indian company issues and incident projects launched by the Indian government. India's male production star under Istanbul Local Engagement Process hints at tantalizing attempts to arrange Afghanistan in the eyes of the domain. Obviously, this date will depend on the stability in Afghanistan. In addition to additional territorial capacities, India is counting on the economic unification of Afghanistan, which will henceforth be accompanied by regional groups in order to balance the domain. Geographical proximity determines the significance of Afghanistan in the foreign affairs of the Northern Indian Community. It has a local perspective to think about the relations between two points of two countries with their own government together.



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