

Synopsis

India-Iran Strategic and Economic Relations

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Bilateral relations between states are driven by shared political, economic, cultural and strategic interests. Their policies and actions are significantly influenced and governed by the international environment and domestic factors. They are neither fixed nor do they run in straight lines rather, they are subject to many ups and downs caused by the constituent elements of foreign policy. Indo-Iran relations are no exceptions to the above logic. The world political environment has undergone a significant transformation due to revolutions in technology and communications leading to sophistication in the format of both bilateral and multilateral relations among the nation-states. Indo-Iran relations are no exceptions to the above logic. The end of the Cold War, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, resulted in the emergence of a new world order of multilateral nature at the global level. With the US emerging as one of the dominant powers at the global level there has been marked changes in the foreign policies of the states after end of the Cold War. From Iran's viewpoint, the conflicts in the Persian Gulf have strengthened the United States' standing and its connections with Arab nations, leading to a heightened military presence that has, in turn, diminished Tehran's natural influence in the region. Indo-Iran relations have been remodelled with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the strategic and economic relations between India and the United States. India-Iran relations thereafter, in the nature of changing perspectives of India's interest towards the US, vice-versa therefore US perspectives as major factor in the realisations of India-Iran relations. Iran perceives India as a major regional power in South Asia to explore and enhance Iran's economic and strategic interests in the bilateral relations format. India, meanwhile having lost its Cold War-era Soviet patronage, has sought to reorient its Gulf policy, addressing India's economic and security interests by not interfering with regional dynamics and external interest perceptions. Contextualising the prevailing atmosphere both at the regional and global levels, has propelled India and Iran to forge a common path of mutual

cooperation and to secure their strategic and economic relations. The consequent emergence of "Pan-Americana" in the West Asian region and the security threat perceptions led Iran to have closer bilateral relations with India.

India and Iran have a long-standing relationship that has evolved over thousands of years, characterised by significant interactions across political, economic, and cultural aspects of diplomacy. The first formal diplomatic ties were established on March 15, 1950. India maintains an embassy in Tehran along with two consulates located in Bandar Abbas and Zahedan. Prior to the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi visited India on two occasions—March 1956 and February 1978. India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, made a trip to Iran in 1963, followed by visits from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in April 1974 and Prime Minister Morarji Desai in June 1977, to bolster diplomatic relations.

Post-revolutionary interactions included a visit from Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to Iran in 1993 and an official visit by Iranian President Rafsanjani to India in 1995. In October 1996, Indian Vice President Shri K. R. Narayanan visited Iran. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Tehran in April 2001, which resulted in the signing of the "Tehran Declaration," outlining potential areas for collaboration between the nations.

The Iranian President Mohammad Khatami attended India's Republic Day celebrations as Chief Guest from January 24-28, 2003. During this visit, both countries endorsed "The New Delhi Declaration," which articulated their strategic partnership vision. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh participated in the 16th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held in Tehran from August 28-31, 2012, where he had discussions with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad.

On May 22-23, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook a bilateral visit to Iran, resulting in several significant Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements being signed by both countries. One notable agreement was a trilateral pact on transit and transport among India, Iran, and Afghanistan involving leaders Modi, Rouhani, and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani during their meeting. Additionally, PM Modi launched an international conference themed “India-Iran: Two Great Civilizations” at Vahdat Hall in Tehran and unveiled a Persian manuscript titled “Kalileh Wa Dimneh.” He also engaged with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and President Rouhani during this visit. A joint statement entitled “Civilizational Connect, Contemporary Context” was issued as a result of these discussions.

Dr. Hassan Rouhani, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, made his inaugural State Visit to India from February 15-17, 2018, following an invitation from Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Accompanying Dr. Rouhani was a distinguished delegation that included Cabinet Ministers, senior officials, and business representatives. The visit featured diplomatic interactions and discussions between Prime Minister Modi and President Rouhani. Notably, President Rouhani visited Hyderabad on February 15-16, 2018, where extensive and productive conversations took place regarding bilateral, regional, and multilateral matters in a friendly setting. During this visit, a total of 13 Memoranda of Understanding/Agreements were established between India and Iran. Both leaders expressed their commitment to enhance and diversify high-level engagement through more frequent and varied bilateral exchanges across all levels. A Joint Statement entitled “Towards prosperity through greater connectivity” was also signed during this visit.

Foreign Minister Dr. Javad Zarif visited India on May 28, 2018, where he engaged in talks with then External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj. He also visited India in January 2019 to participate in the Raisina Dialogue – 2019. During this visit, Dr. Zarif once again met with Smt. Swaraj to discuss matters of shared interest and had a meeting with Shri Nitin Gadkari, the Minister of Roads, Transport and Highways. In another trip to India in May 2019, he held discussions with Smt. Swaraj once more.

In December 2018, Iran's Minister of Health and Medical Education, Dr. Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi, visited India for talks on bilateral collaboration with several Indian officials including Shri J. P Nadda (Minister of Health and Family Welfare), Shri Suresh Prabhu (Minister of Commerce and Industry), and Shri Shripad Yesso Naik (Minister of State for AYUSH). The two nations maintain multiple Bilateral Consultative Mechanisms at various levels, which convene regularly.

The 18th India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) took place in New Delhi on December 28, 2015. It was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Dr. Ali Tayyebnia, Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance. An MoU was signed during this meeting covering cooperation in trade, finance, energy, infrastructure, and cultural affairs.

Furthermore, the foreign ministries of both countries engage in regular consultations regarding bilateral and regional matters. On July 16, 2018, Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Seyyed Abbas Araghchi visited India for the 15th round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), where he met with Foreign Secretary Shri Vijay Gokhale. Subsequently, Foreign Secretary Gokhale visited Iran from September 15-16, 2019 for the 16th FOC discussions with his counterpart Dr. Seyyed Abbas Araghchi.

The inaugural tripartite meeting involving the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Republic of India took place on September 11, 2018, in Kabul at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers. Representing Afghanistan was Hekmat Khalil Karzai, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, while India was represented by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale and Iran by Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Abbas Araghchi. The discussions were primarily aimed at strengthening economic collaboration, which included plans for upgrading Chabahar port. Additionally, the meeting addressed enhancing cooperation in areas such as counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics, and ongoing support for the peace and reconciliation process.

In order to comprehend the current dynamics and predict the future direction of India-Iran relations, it is essential to highlight key issues that indicate this path. The first significant matter involves Iran's Farzad-B Gas Field, where an Indian state-owned enterprise, ONGC, played a role during the initial discovery phase. Following the identification of gas reserves, lengthy negotiations between both parties did not yield favorable results for India in securing development rights, leading Iran to opt for independent development of the field. Officially, India has stated that its collaboration in this area was "affected by policy changes on the Iranian side." As per India's Ministry of External Affairs, in January 2020, India was informed that "in the immediate future, Iran would develop the field independently and would like to involve India appropriately at a later stage." India has reiterated that "this matter remains under discussion."

The second significant concern that has emerged as a hallmark of the developing India-Iran relationship is the proposed railway line that would connect Chabahar to Zahedan, which serves as the capital of Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan

Province. This initiative was designed to establish a link between Chabahar Port and Afghanistan, a region of considerable strategic importance for India. Recently, media outlets suggested that Iran had rescinded its proposal to India. However, India has refuted this claim, stating that discussions between the two nations are ongoing to advance this project. As per statements from India's Ministry of External Affairs, an appointed Indian firm, IRCON, is negotiating with an Iranian counterpart, CDTIC, affiliated with Iran's Ministry of Roads and Transportation. They have already completed site inspections and assessed the feasibility report. Furthermore, both parties are currently engaged in in-depth conversations regarding other facets of the project, particularly addressing Iran's financial obstacles. Since December 2019, the details surrounding this initiative were reviewed during their 19th Joint Commission Meeting held in Tehran.

The third significant matter pertains to the Chabahar Port project. In this context, India has made notable strides, particularly in initiating operations following its initial investment for the project's development. India's first commitment to this venture dates back to 2003, with the port becoming operational in 2016. Despite challenges posed by U.S. sanctions, both nations have made substantial headway in this regard, and since 2018, Indian firms have been managing the port's operations. As reported by India's Ministry of External Affairs, from July 2020 onward, the port has accommodated 82 vessels and successfully managed a total of 8,200 containers, equating to approximately 1.2 million tons of bulk cargo. The two countries are additionally investigating strategies to enhance traffic flow to make the port more economically sustainable while also increasing its utilisation for Afghanistan and Central Asia.

In Indian strategic discussions, Chabahar is frequently depicted as a significant advantage for India, particularly in light of China's involvement in the construction of Pakistan's Gwadar Port. Conversely, Iran has refrained from

associating any strategic aspects with the Chabahar Port and has expressed openness to furthering its development in collaboration with other nations, including China. The forthcoming changes related to Chabahar Port and the extent of India's engagement, along with China's role or lack thereof, will influence the developing strategic alliance between India and Iran.

A thorough examination of the depth, characteristics, and evolution of India-Iran relations highlights India's overarching strategy towards West Asia. Recent events suggest that a war-weary United States is increasingly reverting to its historical role as an offshore balancer in the Middle East, thereby opening up opportunities for other nations such as Russia, China, Turkey, and India to strengthen their presence in the region. The recent visits to Tehran by two high-ranking Indian Cabinet ministers, the Defence Minister and Foreign Minister, underscore India's commitment to remaining engaged.

Despite the conclusion of the Cold War and the economic factors that have fostered a stronger partnership between India and the US, the longstanding military collaboration with Russia continues to endure. Russia remains India's primary supplier of military equipment. Notably, India has acquired membership in the group utilizing Russia's S400 missile defense system—a group that also includes China, Turkey, and Iran—signifying a notable alignment among these five nations. This acquisition stands in opposition to US strategic interests. Thus, India's involvement may offer insights into its potential stance regarding the balance of power between the US-led and Russia-led factions within a region where Iran plays a significant role.

In the near future, India's strategic and economic position is expected to result in a limited involvement in West Asia, which will directly influence its relationship with Iran. As India's power increases, it may enhance its ability to project

influence beyond its borders, potentially leading to shifts in its foreign policy. However, India's capacity for offshore operations may be restricted due to its geographical location between two rival nuclear states, China and Pakistan, both of which claim significant portions of its strategic resources. Additionally, unlike China, India lacks permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council and does not possess the same level of economic and military weight in Iran's considerations when choosing between India and China.

Despite India's reliance on energy from West Asia, its economic ties are primarily with Western nations. A substantial portion of India's GDP stems from the service sector that mainly caters to Western markets, including the United States. This factor plays a role in India's risk assessments regarding relations with Iran and often leads to a disconnect between its ambitions and actual commitments. Consequently, India's approach toward Iran may appear either ambiguous or overly compliant with US pressures.

In contrast to India, China boasts a rapidly expanding manufacturing sector that necessitates access to raw materials and broader markets. This need significantly influences China's evaluation of risks associated with US sanctions while establishing connections with Iran. As a result, these two countries are forging a long-term partnership that could alter dynamics in West Asia and negatively affect India-Iran relations.

Moreover, the Abraham Accords strengthen opposition against Iran and could further isolate it, hindering advancements in India-Iran relations. Ongoing US efforts to isolate Iran are likely to persist due to bipartisan support within the United States aimed at limiting Iran's regional influence and curtailing its missile and nuclear programs. The context of combating ISIS was pivotal during Barack

Obama's decision to negotiate the Iran nuclear deal. However, this incentive no longer exists for similar agreements moving forward.

For India, Iran has historically represented an opportunity to enhance its influence beyond its borders, both economically and strategically. However, Iran has often aligned itself more closely with Western nations and is now increasingly moving towards China, which may jeopardize its relationship with India. This realization is becoming evident to India, particularly through the challenges posed by stalled or unsuccessful negotiations, leading to a growing sense of frustration regarding India's efforts to strengthen connections with Iran. These factors suggest that the progression of India-Iran relations may further decelerate until a sustainable resolution to the tensions between Iran and the United States is achieved.

In this context, the proposed research attempts to establish and develop a comprehensive understanding of the changing contours of strategic and economic relations between India and Iran, and also the study attempts to find out the external factors which somehow play determining roles in Indo-Iranian relations. The study further aims to explore new policy dynamics for India to suit its strategic and economic interests in the tune of Iran's perceptions and national interests.

The proposed research examines the strategic and economic relations between India and Iran from 1991 to 2022 through the lens of various theoretical frameworks. Neorealism emphasises the security maximisation efforts of both nations within a multipolar context, highlighting Iran as India's western access point while India provides strategic depth for Iran to mitigate its regional isolation. Neoliberal Institutionalism sheds light on their collaborative efforts by referencing institutions such as the Chabahar Agreement and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which facilitate cooperation despite

systemic limitations. Constructivism illustrates how shared civilizational ties, historical connections, and common non-Western identities foster mutual understanding with reference to cultural diplomacy and interpersonal exchanges. Hedging Theory accounts for India's strategy of maintaining autonomy, avoiding exclusive affiliations with any particular bloc. While engaging with Iran, it tries to cultivate relationships with the United States, Israel, and Gulf countries. Complex Interdependence reveals how interconnected initiatives, energy security issues, and transnational economic networks create mutual vulnerabilities and opportunities that extend beyond traditional security considerations.

The proposed research examines the relationships between India and Iran through the lens of different perspectives affecting their bilateral relations. The geostrategic importance of Iran for India's energy security and regional connectivity, infrastructure projects, and dynamics of soft power diplomacy are evident. The geopolitical challenges posed by major powers such as the U.S., rivalries between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the strategic partnership between China and Pakistan would be the thrust dimensions of the proposed research. It highlights how India navigates the conflicting pressures through a pragmatic approach, engaging selectively with Iran on critical interests such as Chabahar while addressing concerns related to Western sanctions.

Review of Literature: -

There have been a huge number of published books, scripts, research papers, and articles on India-Iran relations. The available literary sources related to the mentioned area have so far mostly paid attention to the historical, political, and cultural dimensions. There have also been many analytical studies on the foreign policies of both countries in general. The emphasis on historical, cultural, and

political relations between India and Iran has been studied widely in the published works by a number of eminent scholars. However, very few literatures have focused on the changing nature and dynamics of strategic and economic relations between the two countries. The proposed research has outlined some research gaps in the specific areas of study. In this proposed research, the researcher has gone through the following literary works very carefully: -

Book Review

1. Girijesh Pant, P.C Jain & A.K Pasha (Eds.) “Contemporary Iran and Emerging Indo-Iran Relations” (2019): This edited compendium by Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Gulf Studies Programme provides a full spectrum view on unfolding bilateral relations between the two countries. It explores traditional continuities and current challenges such as energy integration, regional politics and cultural cooperation. The book also examines how India is negotiating its engagement with Iran in the context of shifting global scenarios; to that end volume will serve as important reading for comprehending post-Cold War strategies of engagement.

2. Bhat Mukhtar Ahamed, "India and Iran Relations in Twentieth First Century" (2019): The book systematically covers India-Iran engagements through the examination of economic ties especially energy security. The author examines the diplomatic obstacles presented by international sanctions and US pressure, and reveals future options for collaboration. The book offers informative analysis on how these two countries draw the fine line between strategic autonomy and global constraints, and pragmatic estimations of connectivity projects like Chabahar Port.

3. Ashwarya Sujata, “India-Iran Relations: Progress, Problems and Prospects” (2017) This book is a comprehensive look at the India-Iran

relationship, with voices from both sides on issues like trade, energy and strategic cooperation as well as challenges posed by sanctions and regional dynamics. The author sharply examines India's balancing act vis-à-vis Iran and Western powers, especially with respect to the nuclear talks. The book also examines various possibilities to strengthen bilateral relations and constraints in their historically significant relationship.

4. Suja Asif, "India-Iran Relations: Under the Shadow of the Iranian Nuclear Issue" (2017):

The author analyses how Iran's independent nuclear development programme has been a source of complication for India's diplomatic overtures. The book also studies India's voting at the IAEA, energy dependence and strategic parleys in the background of Western sanctions. It offers important views of India's foreign policy predicament where the nation's interests conflict with international pressures, as well as the testing nature of navigating strategic autonomy in a multi-polar world.

5. Goud R Sidda & Mookherjee Manisha (ed.), 'India and Iran in Contemporary Relations' (2016): This edited volume examines various aspects of the relationship between India and Iran, such as trade relations, cultural ties and regional security issues. The book also explains India's realpolitik with Iran, its role as a significant priority for both regional connectivity projects, the global powers' diktat, and mutual Afghani concerns. The book successfully situates the current relations in historical and civilizational perspectives.

6. Alam Anwar (ed.), "India and Iran: Evolving Relations" (2011): A scholarly analysis of the bilateral relationship at a critical juncture. Alam examines energy cooperation, regional security calculus and India's diplomatic tightrope in the face of international sanctions. The author has provided vital

insight into how India balanced its relationship with Iran while engaging the Western powers, thus reflecting Indian pragmatism in foreign policy.

7. Bari Mohammad Nazrul (ed.), " Enduring Civilizational Encounter" (2015): This book highlights the ancient civilisational links between India and Iran over a long period. The author maps out cultural, linguistic and historical ties in order to defamiliarize contemporary political and economic relations. The book contends that ancient connections continues to be relevant for the countries engaged in this common endeavour of peace and prosperity, by providing novel insight into how civilizational affinity shapes contemporary diplomacy and strategic alliances amidst changing geopolitical landscapes.

8. H.A Nazmi (ed.), 'Contemporary West Asia and North Africa: Defining India's Role' (2019): In this volume, Indo-Iranian relations are described in the context of West Asian dynamics. The author also deals with India's changing strategic trajectory in the region, covering energy security, connectivity initiatives and maritime engagement. The book places bilateral relations in the context of India's strategy of overall regional engagement, suggesting how Iran constitutes a part of its extended neighborhood and Act East policy.

9. Kumaraswamy P.R. & Roy Meena Singh, "Persian Gulf 2016-17: India's Relations with the Region", 2018 This IDSA publication is an annual appraisal of India's relations with Iran. It assesses economic interaction, sharing of defense technology, and diaspora concerns to understand how regional tensions have affected Indian interests. The book provides worthwhile insights into India's elusive balancing of Iran and Arab gulf states, and the difficulties of treating both sides equally across the Persian Gulf.

10. Mahmood Fazal & Azmi Rafiullah (ed.), “Foreign Policy of India and West Asia” (2014): An edited book that studies the new trends as well as continuities in the foreign policy of India toward the region in post-liberalisation. The book explains Iran as part of India’s expansive regional strategy featuring energy diplomacy, strategic partnerships, Arab Spring responses, and the creation of new multilateral institutions. The book convincingly shows how India was able to reconcile its traditional non-alignment policy with the power dynamics of today, without abandoning its foreign policy.

11. Prof. A.K. Pasha (ed.), "India's Political and Foreign Relations with the Gulf Region" (2014): The author considers India’s holistic Gulf engagement, placing ties with Iran side by side those with Arab states. It's a study of historical evolution, economic interdependence and strategic architecture. It goes some way to explain how India juggles conflicting interests and keeps ears and doors open at both ends of the ideological and political spectrum in the strategically significant Gulf.

12. Prof. A.K Pasha (ed.), “India and the GCC States” (2014): This is a companion volume that deals specifically with India-GCC relations but offers important background on India’s policy toward Iran. The author examines how India manages relations between Iran and the Arab Gulf states including economic links, defense collaboration, and energy security. The book focuses on the diplomatic challenges in sustaining balanced relations in regional disputes and sectarian frictions.

13. Alam Anwar (ed.), “India, Global Power and West Asia” (2011) This book analyse the global rise of India, and its impact on engagement in West Asia. The author examines the ramifications of India s rising economic and strategic capacities on its relations with Iran and regional policies. The book situates India–

Iran relations amidst India's desire for increased power status in world politics and the opportunities and challenges of seeking regional power status.

14. Alam Anwar (ed.), “India and West Asia in the era of Globalisation” (2008): This book examines how globalization influenced India's relationship with West Asia, more specifically Iran. The author analyse the effects of liberalization on trade flows, energy collaboration and diplomatic postures. The book offers unique perspectives on how economic reforms and globalisation influenced India's policy towards Iran, balancing commercial interests with its concern for strategic autonomy.

15. Anwar (ed.), “Iran and Post-9/11 World Order” (2009): This book is a study of Iran’s nuclear program and what it has meant for the world. Though not specifically on the India-Iran relationship, it will enable the reader to understand the challenges that India had encountered in sustaining relationship with Iran under international sanctions and Western pressures. The book examines diplomacy, regional security issues and non-proliferation discussions and the impact of these on bilateral engagement.

16. Dr. A.K. Pasha, “India, Iran and the GCC States” (2000): This book looks at trilateral dynamics as of the year 2000. The author analyses India’s attempts to manage its relationships with both Iran and the Arab Gulf countries amidst ongoing regional conflicts. Penned before significant post-9/11 changes, it offers useful base knowledge of bilateral ties and regional intricacies that would go on to influence the course of India’s Gulf diplomacy.

17. G.A. Qamar, "The Early Cultural Relations of India and Iran" (2011): The author studies ancient inter-civilisational links through cultural contact, commercial avenues and intellectual ties. Although rooted in history, the book

offers important history for those interested in modern cultural developments. It shows how history informs contemporary diplomacy and people-to-people relations between the two civilizations.

18. A.K.Pasha (ed.), “Perspectives On Indian and the Gulf Countries” (1999)

This edited volume reflects on India’s Gulf relations at a transformative moment. The author examines the effects of economic liberalization on bilateral relations, early in terms of its relationship with Iran. The book offers crucial historical insights in to how the reforms of the 1990s triggered momentous changes in India’s West Asian engagement thereby consolidating the base for extended cooperation.

19. A.K. Pasha, "India and West Asia: Continuity and Change" (1999)

In his book, the author examines emerging trends in India's policy toward West Asia in the 1990s. This examine the impact that economic liberalization, post-Cold War reordering and domestic political transformation had on bilateral relations with Iran. Theis book is important because it offers critical perspective on the adaptation of policies around traditions of friendship, and spans Cold War and post-Cold War eras.

20. Ahmad Talmiz, The Islamist Challenge in West Asia (2013):

In the book author discusses the Arab Spring's effect on regional power politics and its relevance for India. Although not primarily focused on Iran, the author explores how the regional turmoil impacted India’s strategic thinking and its bilateral ties. The book gives crucial background to the way in which regional instability shaped India-Iran cooperation on Afghanistan and other common worries.

21. Alam Anwar, "Contemporary West Asia - Politics and Development"

(2010): This book examine the regional political economy and developmental

concerns. The author situates India-Iran relationship in the wider context of change in West Asia. It is a scholarly effort that looks at the interplay between regional interaction and bilateral cooperation. The book offers valuable insights into the role of Iran in the region and how India deals with complex politics to pursue strategic as well as economic interests.

22. Khan Javed Ahmad, "India and West Asia: Emerging Markets in the Liberalisation Era" (1999): The author examines liberal economic policy impact on relations with the region during its early stages, especially trade and investment. The book analyses the ways in which market-oriented reforms presented themselves as opening up mutually beneficial possibilities for bilateral economic cooperation with Iran and other regional states, thus shifting away from previous state-centric approaches towards more commercially driven relations.

Article Review

1. Soltaninejad, M. (2017). Iran-India Relations: The elusive strategic partnership. *India Quarterly: Journal of International Affairs*, 73(1), 21-35.

This article examines the factors that have prevented India and Iran from establishing a strategic partnership, despite significant potential for collaboration. The primary reason lies in their conflicting foreign policy goals, while Iran aims to maintain a balance with the United States, India seeks to engage with both Iran and the US, which has hindered deeper relations between them. Utilising soft balancing theory, the article reveals how US influence has consistently obstructed cooperative diplomatic initiatives between the two nations, even when there is a shared interest in regional stability, economic development, and geographical closeness. The author concludes that these differing strategic priorities have

limited their relationship to one characterised as 'cordial' and 'friendly', rather than genuinely strategic.

2. Pant, H. V. (2011). India's ties with Iran: Much ado about nothing. The Washington Quarterly, 34(1), 61-74.

The author critically analyses the "strategic partnership" between India and Iran, asserting that it lacks substantial strategic depth. He examines how India's policy in the Middle East is interpreted through an Iranian perspective, particularly concerning the nuclear debate related to Iran. This article illustrates India's nuanced role in balancing its ties with Iran while fostering a growing strategic alliance with the United States. The author contends that Western emphasis on specific aspects of India-Iran relations has obscured the reality that India is increasingly engaged with Arab Gulf nations and Israel, noting that there is very little within the relationship itself that can be considered genuinely "strategic."

3. Pant, H. V. (2004). India and Iran: An 'axis'? Asian Survey, 44(3), 369-383.

This article explores the connections between India and Iran during a pivotal time when both nations announced a strategic partnership. Pant investigates the strategic rationale behind Indo-Iranian collaboration, highlighting significant constraints that prevent their partnership from achieving its maximum potential. These challenges include pressure from the United States, regional dynamics, and India's conflicts with Israel and Saudi Arabia. The article also illuminates areas of cooperation in energy, regional security issues, and the interplay between domestic and international politics that shaped bilateral relations in the early 2000s.

4. Pant, H. V. (2007). A delicate balance: India walks a tightrope between Iran and the United States. *Orbis*, 51(3), 495-509.

This article illustrates India's precarious balancing act between its energy obligations to Iran and its strategic partnerships with the United States. The author analyses how India has navigated external influences on its foreign policy regarding Iran's nuclear program, all while protecting its energy security needs and regional interests in Afghanistan and Central Asia. This article explores the conflicting demands of Indian domestic politics and strategic interests concerning Iran, highlighting how India's aspirations on the global stage and increasing closeness to the US have intensified this contradiction.

5. Omid, A., Hafeez M. (2023). Indo-Iran Relationship: Role of Third-Party Interference. *South Asian Survey, India Quarterly*.

This article explores the evolution of India's foreign policy, shifting from Nehruism to Pragmatism, and its repercussions for India-Iran relations. The authors argue that despite the long-standing historical, cultural, and economic ties between India and Iran, particularly in terms of energy supply over several decades, India has increasingly turned to Saudi Arabia and Iraq to support its contemporary megaprojects. This article highlights a new strategic alignment between India and Western nations, while also serving as a crucial reminder of how external influences, particularly from the United States and Israel, have affected bilateral relationships. The article examines this significant change in India's foreign policy and its implications for regional coalitional dynamics.

6. Omid, A., & Noolkar Oak, G. (2022). Geopolitics of Chabahar port for Iran, India and Afghanistan. *Geopolitics Quarterly*, 17.

This article evaluates the trilateral economic agreement established in January 2016 regarding Chabahar Port, located in southeastern Iran. The authors investigate the strategic, economic, and trade importance of Chabahar for both Iran and India. The authors characterise the trade partnership between Iran and India as a strategic countermeasure to China's Belt and Road Initiative and Pakistan's Gwadar port. This article explores how the initiative aligns with the objectives of both nations, enhancing regional connectivity and facilitating access to Central Asian markets via the Indian coastline while also countering Chinese dominance in the Indian Ocean region and South Asia.

7. Singh, S., and Singh, B. (2019). Ports geopolitics: Iran in India's balance of power maritime strategy against 'Sino-Pak' axis. *Geopolitics Quarterly*.

This article explores the importance of Iran from India's perspective, particularly in relation to the China-Pakistan axis. The author analyses how the post-Cold War period is introducing a new facet to the relationship between India and Iran. They argue that Chabahar Port serves as a crucial element in India's strategy to counterbalance the Sino-Pak strategic alliance. Furthermore, this article addresses a significant gap in existing literature by examining Indian regional security frameworks and Iran's role within India's overall strategic considerations concerning China and Pakistan.

8. Haji Yousefi, A., & Narouei, H. (2021). Geopolitics, geo-economics and possibility of Iran-India partnership in Chabahar. *Geopolitics Quarterly*, 17(63).

This article explores the geopolitical and geo-economic dimensions of the Iran-India partnership through the development of Chabahar port. The authors analyse how this collaboration aligns with their strategic goals of accessing Central Asian

markets and countering rival influences. They assess both the opportunities and challenges for bilateral cooperation within the context of regional politics, including longstanding US sanctions and emerging Chinese assertiveness. The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the implications of the Chabahar project for each country's foreign policy objectives.

9. Fair, C. C. (2007). India and Iran: New Delhi's tightrope walk. *The Washington Quarterly*, 30(3), 145-159.

The author examines the elements that captivate India in allying with Iran, ultimately concluding that, despite apprehensions from the United States, such a collaboration is plausible. She delves into India's energy requirements, regional security concerns, and its perspective on Afghanistan to elucidate the reasoning behind New Delhi's interactions with Tehran. This article analyses the ramifications of this partnership for other regional players, including Pakistan, Israel, and the United States. Fair offers a perceptive analysis of India's intricate balancing act as it seeks to diminish its connections with Iran while concurrently enhancing its ties with Western countries and Israel.

10. Verma, S. K. (2007). Energy politics and the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline. *Energy Policy*, 35(6).

In this article, the author analyses the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project and its geopolitical implications. The discussion includes aspects of energy security, potential for regional collaboration, and challenges such as U.S. opposition and the rivalry between India and Pakistan. The examination highlights how this significant initiative could alter the energy landscape in the region, despite facing considerable political and security hurdles. Throughout the timeline discussed, various factors ranging from technical details to geopolitical dynamics and

economic considerations have hindered the realisation of this crucial project. The article underscores the intricate relationship between energy and security in South Asia.

11. Khan, M. N. (2001). India's engagement with Iran: problem and prospects. Strategic Analysis, XXV(6).

This article examines Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Iran in April 2001 and its effects on the relationship between the two countries. The author investigates agreements related to oil and gas, highlighting Iran's willingness to supply energy to India via pipelines. Additionally, the article discusses how both nations sought to bridge years of tension stemming from the 1979 Iranian revolution through economic and strategic reconciliation. The author provides a historical context for India-Iran relations after the Cold War and assesses prospects for cooperation.

12. Baidya, S. (2017). India's policy on Iran: Ambiguities and complexities. International Studies (Sage Publications).

This article examines the complexities and obstacles inherent in India's policy towards Iran, positing that it is significantly influenced by India's broader ambitions and its interactions with major global powers. The author contends that India's approach to Iran is a balance between strategic policy and political considerations. She asserts that before the Iranian Nuclear Deal, U.S. pressure had constrained India's ability to independently formulate its policy regarding Iran. The article presents a crucial argument indicating that India's quest for great power status has substantially shaped its bilateral relationship with Iran.

13. Khan, K. H., and Ekstrom, M. (2024). The INSTC and Chabahar port: A review. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*.

The authors conducted a thorough literature review and bibliometric analysis encompassing various scholarly articles related to the INSTC and Chabahar port. The study identifies four distinct phases in the academic progression of research on this subject, along with the impact of these articles on economic corridors and transnational governance. It emphasises the significant role of Sino-Indian rivalry and Indo-Iranian collaboration in driving development, while also noting Russia's increased interest following the Ukraine conflict in 2022. This comprehensive assessment provides a valuable synthesis of existing literature and outlines directions for future research.

15. Alam, A. (2011). Iran-India: Analysis of the present relations. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 22(1), 140–142.

This article analyses the evolution of Iran's modern relationship with India, particularly during a period characterised by international sanctions and shifting regional dynamics. It examines the two nations' collaboration in areas such as energy, trade, and regional security, offering insights into how they navigated their partnership amid external pressures and competing strategic interests from other regional and global powers. Despite its brevity, this article effectively summarises key elements of intergovernmental relations during that era.

16. Scott, D. (2009). India's extended neighbourhood: power projection for a rising power. *India Review*, 8(2), 107-143.

The extended neighbourhood of India as a frame of power projection is the subject of this article. The author examines the way in which India perceives its

strategic environment, a region that is no longer confined to South Asia but encompasses the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. It discusses how Iran is part of this enlarged strategic vision, and New Delhi was trying to build bridges across the extended neighbourhood, largely using diplomatic and economic initiatives. The author's analysis gives us a lot of context about how India thinks strategically, about its engagement not just in the region but also across trans-regional spaces.

17. Hathaway, R. M. (2004). India's 'strategic partnership' with Iran. Asia Program Special Report, No. 120. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Centre for International Scholars.

This article examines fresh warmth in New Delhi and Tehran's relations post-2003 announcement of their "strategic partnership." Hathaway considers how this particular collaboration may affect the interests of other regional stakeholders. It also includes several pieces of analysis which examine the calculations that render Iran an attractive partner to India, Iranian views on the relationship, Pakistan's apprehensions about it and its impact on India's relations with Israel. The article includes an in-depth, multi-faceted review of the announcement of the strategic partnership and its regional impact.

18. Pethiyagoda, K. (2018). India's quest for strategic and economic goals in Iran. Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper No.23

This article examines India's intricate balancing act as it navigates its strategic interests with Iran while maintaining its relationships with the United States and Israel. Pethiyagoda looks at India's need for energy security, the strategic significance of the Chabahar port and what global sanctions have done to bilateral trade. This article examines India's pragmatic engagement with Iran despite

external challenges with economic and geopolitical calculations in Indian policy-making. The study offers a subtle understanding of India's Iran policy in an overall strategic perspective.

19. Wani, S. H., Mir, M. A., & Shah, I. A. (2019). India–Iran trade in the face of USA Sanctions. *Foreign Trade Review*, 54(3), 199-216.

India-Iran trade ties in the face of US sanctions are analysed through this article. The authors examine the impact of sanctions on bilateral trade flows, including oil imports and other industries. They consider India's efforts to continue on an economic path with Iran despite international and financial limitations. The article provides a practical analysis of trade data and its repercussions for the economic interests of both nations. Additionally, the authors explore how India has balanced international sanctions with its strategic priorities.

20. Pant, H. V. (2013). India in Afghanistan: A test case for emerging power. *Journalism of International Relations*, 17(1), 1—24.

The article examines India's involvement in Afghanistan and how it plays within the context of India-Iran relations. The author explores how India's role in Afghan reconstruction and development relies greatly on Iranian cooperation, especially at Chabahar port. The article further considers how, for India, an Afghanistan policy involves juggling Pakistan and the US with great delicacy yet again. Afghanistan, Pant contends, is the testing ground where India's growing power aspirations will be measured along with its ability to manage tricky regional geopolitics.

21. Kaura, V., et al. (2024). Taliban-ruled Afghanistan as a catalyst for India-Iran cooperation. *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, 9(1), pp.57-72.

This article examines how the Taliban's control of Afghanistan serves as a new impetus for India to re-engage with Iran. The authors examine trust-building prospects for India with Iran in conceptualising long-term stakes in Afghanistan. They point out that India and Iran have common concerns, particularly in a Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and cooperation over Afghanistan could open up new pathways for India's strategic depth and assuage its national security worries. This article offers current perspectives on regional security and the reconfiguration of India-Iran relations.

22. Ganie, R. A., 2: For entry in: Ganie, M. A. (2022). India's Afghanistan Policy Post US Pullout. *Humanities and Social Science Communications*, 9:462.

This article looks at India's interests and options in Afghanistan after US pullout and the Taliban comeback. The authors analyse how the US removal of the Taliban in 2001 opened political space for India to re-enter Afghanistan. They explore India's soft power strategy and the implications of its developmental initiatives, faced with challenges from the resurgence of the Taliban, supported by Pakistan. This article states how these developments are affecting India's necessity of holding a close relationship with Iran to get access to Afghanistan, which seriously contradicts its regional security stances.

23. Abbassian, P. (2022). Iran's calculus in the face of the Taliban resurgence: "enemy of my enemy" dynamics. *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 9(3).

The author uses the “My Enemy’s Enemy” model to analyse Iran's policy towards the resurgence of the Taliban. In a nuanced account, Abbassian examines Iran’s management of intricate security dilemmas in the wake of the rise to power Taliban in Afghanistan. This article also analyses the implications for regional security and other issues of Iran’s strategic thinking on Afghanistan, which would affect India’s interests in the region and the scope for interaction between India, Iran and Afghanistan. This article offers, from an Iranian point of view, the regional security structure and its impact on Indo-Iran relations.

24. Nasirpour, G. (2019). Iran-India relations with future prospects. *Geopolitics Quarterly*, 14(4), 165-187.

This article examines the Iran-India relationship and its prospects for cooperation. Considering political, economic and strategic aspects of the relationship, the author verifies this relationship. The author delves into some of the opportunities and challenges that both nation faces as their relationship develops. This paper presents the views of an Iranian intellectual perspective on the bilateral relations and reflects how Iran's soft power has shaped views in the Indian capital as its connection with India, including an evaluation of potential future ties between the two countries in various fields.

25. Rahman, K. (2010). Indo-Iranian relations and the current developments in the region. *Policy Perspectives*, 7(2), 27-49.

This article discusses India-Iran relations in the backdrop of shifting regional balances. The author demonstrates how developments in South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East regions impact their bilateral relations. This article analyses energy cooperation, regional security challenges and the implications of great power competition to India-Iran relations. The author offers a detailed exploration

of the impact of regional politics on both opportunities and challenges that would most likely continue to characterise bilateral cooperation as well as the influences of a convoluting regional environment.

26. V. Suresh and K. Ramesh, (2015). India-Iran relations: Prospects and challenges. African Journal of Political Science and International Relations. Vol. 9(10), pp. 379-385, October 2015

This article analyses a multidimensional bilateral relationship, including economic cooperation, security cooperation and geopolitics. The author examines how both countries dealt with intricate international sanctions, their worries about energy security, and regional security considerations (especially in Afghanistan after 2014). It underscores India's strategic reliance on Iranian oil and the significance of Chabahar port for regional connectivity, while taking note of frictions due to Iran's nuclear programme and American sanctions. This article offers an objective view of the prospects and challenges in the Saudi-Russian relationship.

27. Sanjay Jain & Wajahat Abdullah (2019). India-Iran Relations in Post-Cold War Era: Problems and Prospects. Think Tank Journal, vol-2, Issue-14, Dec-2019

This article examines post-Cold War conditions for prospective regional allies. This article elucidates strategic, political and economic reasons for India to strive for a strong relationship with the Islamic Republic. It discusses geopolitical aspects, co-operation in energy, the war on terror and US influence on bilateral relations. This article provides a historical examination of how the conclusion of the Cold War created both new avenues for collaboration between India and Iran, as well as new limitations.

28. Roshandel, J. (2004). The long overdue strategic partnership between the two nations. In R. M. Hathaway (Ed.), Asia Program Special Report No. 120 (pp.16-20). Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars.

The author examines an Iranian view of the India-Iran cooperation agreement signed in 2003. The author analyses why Iran has decided to engage more closely with India, not only to export its energy, but also for economic partnership and common interests in Afghanistan. This article analyses why India is a crucial partner for Iran in international isolation, and makes headway in meeting its economic development targets despite Western sanctions. This article is particularly useful for its insights into Iranian strategic norms regarding the relationship.

29. Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2004). India, Iran and Israel: Dynamics of a triangular relationship. In R. M. Hathaway (Ed.), Asia Program Special Report 120. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars.

This article explores the implications of India-Iran collaboration and New Delhi's economic and strategic relations with Israel. The author analyses India's delicate role in balancing Iran and Israel, like these bitter enemies. He examines how India can balance these competitive dynamics and implications for security trends in the Middle East and South Asia. This article usefully analyses the implications of India-Iran engagement in their other strategic partnerships in the region.

30. Fair, C. C. (2004). India and Iran strengthen security ties: More than just oil. In R. M. Hathaway (Ed.), Asia Program Special Report No. 120. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The author's examination of the "strategic partnership" between India and Iran highlights several elements that render Iran attractive to New Delhi. Key areas of focus include energy collaboration, policies regarding Afghanistan, and the dynamics of regional security. Fair argues that, notwithstanding the influence of the US and diverging national interests, this bilateral relationship holds significant strategic value for both nations and is expected to persist. The author emphasises that the ties between India and Iran extend beyond energy considerations to encompass wider security cooperation.

31. Yazdani, E. (2007). The changing nature of India-Iran relations in the post-Cold War period: A geo-political perspective. South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, 30(2), 351-368.

This article provides a comprehensive geopolitical analysis that is India's association with Iran following the Cold War period. The author explores how the complex and intertwined geopolitical landscape has introduced new facets to their bilateral relations. It is argued that Iran harbours concerns regarding Pakistan's involvement with the Western Taliban regime, and the escalating violence against the Shiite minority in Sunni-dominated Pakistan has negatively influenced Iran-Pakistan ties. The author examines the collapse of the USSR and the rise of the Central Asian Republics, highlighting their significance for India as it loses direct access to Eurasia while China ascends as a regional competitor.

32. Naaz, F. (2001). Indo-Iranian relations 1947-2000. Strategic Analysis (published by IDSA).

This article explores the dynamics of the relationship between India and Iran from the period of India's independence through to the conclusion of the 20th century. The author notes that during the 1950s, the tension in relations was shaped by Iran's association with the Axis powers and India's stance in the Non-Alignment Movement. However, interactions remained positive throughout the 1960s and 1970s, with notable exceptions during Ayatollah Khomeini's regime. Furthermore, it highlights that after the Cold War, India and Iran found common ground due to shared perceptions of security threats. Iran was apprehensive about American ties with Arab nations and neighbouring countries perceived as problematic. Meanwhile, India faced its own set of challenges stemming from geopolitical dynamics among nearby groupings, security concerns extending beyond its borders, and regional rivalries affecting various aspects such as energy supply, political changes in Afghanistan, geographical factors, and market relationships.

33. Naaz, F. (2001). Indo-Iranian relations: Key factors in the 1990s. Strategic Analysis.

This article examines significant aspects of Indo-Iranian relations during the 1990s. The author suggests that the conclusion of the Cold War coincided with the rise of "Pan-Americana" in West Asia fostered a shared desire for autonomy in foreign policy between India and Iran, leading to closer ties. The article highlights this paradoxical characteristic, which, aside from existing tensions, defined their interaction within the US-dominated global landscape post-Cold War. Key topics addressed include energy collaboration, Afghanistan—where both leaders advocated for a political resolution through a broad-based government—and Central Asia, where mutual interests centred on security and stability were evident.

34. Pant, H. V., & Super, J. M. (2013). Balancing rivals: India's tightrope between Iran and U.S. Asian Policy, 15, 145-159.

This article examines the intricate balance India maintains between its engagements with Iran and the formation of a strategic alliance with the United States. The authors analyse how India has navigated this fragile diplomatic landscape, particularly regarding Iran's nuclear program and international sanctions. They reflect on how India's energy security needs, interests in Afghanistan and Central Asia, and aspiration for strategic independence have shaped its approach to Iran, even as Washington increases its influence. This article provides nuanced insights and detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by India in managing this tripartite relationship and its implications for regional security.

35. Zakharov, A. (2023). Russian-Indian Connectivity via INSTC: Opportunities and Challenges. MGIMO Review of International Relations, 16 (2).

The prospects and challenges for connectivity of Russia with India via the International North South Transport Corridor are considered in this article. The author examines the way in which INSTC is a combined transport network that links South Asia to Central Asia, Russia and beyond to Europe, where Chabahar plays an important role as a node. The author analyses the economic and geopolitical relevance of this corridor for both countries. This article presents the Russian perspective on the trilateral collaboration among Iran and India, aimed at establishing alternative trade routes.

Objectives of the Study

The proposed research tends to address the following objectives:

1. To explore the contours of historical and civilizational aspects of relations between India and Iran.
2. To examine the changing nature and dynamics of the strategic and economic relations between India and Iran.
3. To study the context and role of external dynamics in India-Iran relations.
4. To analyse the nature of bilateral ties and agreements between India and Iran.

Research Methodology

The proposed research employs predominantly qualitative research methods, with a focus on both descriptive and analytical research. To address the core idea of this research, both primary and secondary data have been used. The interview method has been used as a tool for collecting primary data. The interview method included open-ended interview questions. Primary data sources include both states' diplomatic white papers, MoU agreements, and policy documents. On the contrary, secondary data for this research have been acquired from plenty of books, journal articles, monographs, and annual reports from international and regional organisations. Furthermore, NGO, think tank, and government official websites, as well as reputed newspapers from both states, have been utilised for secondary data sources.

Research Questions: -

In the process of the proposed research, the researcher has gone through the research questions:-

- 1) Why is the Islamic Republic of Iran strategically important for India?

- 2) How do the aspects of connectivity enhance economic prosperity and regional stability between India and Iran?
- 3) What are the components of soft power diplomacy between India and Iran?
- 4) What extent the role of external dynamics influences the India-Iran bilateral relations?
- 5) What are the various challenges in India-Iran bilateral relations?

Chapterization:

Introduction: In the introduction, the theoretical framework of the research, the Significance of the Research, the Review of Literature, the Objective of the study, the Research Methodology, the Research Question, and the Scope of the Research.

Chapter-I:- Perspectives on India-Iran bilateral relations.

This chapter has dealt with the historical and civilizational dimensions of India-Iran relations and the role of such dimensions in cementing the strategic and economic relations.

Chapter- II:- Strategic Importance of Iran in India's Foreign Policy.

This chapter will discuss the impact of Iran's strategic position on India's foreign policy. It also discusses different aspects of the diplomatic stands of India and Iran and their impact on regional and international politics. Further, it also

discusses different treaties between India and Iran in the field of strategic and economic cooperation.

Chapter- III:- Connectivity and Bilateral Economic Security Issues in India-Iran Relations.

This chapter will discuss the changing dimensions of bilateral economic relations between India and Iran. The present context of connectivity discourse and economic engagement between the two countries has been addressed in this chapter. The chapter also encompasses the core areas of contestation of economic interests between the two countries.

Chapter- IV:- Soft Power Diplomacy in India-Iran Bilateral Relations.

This chapter has gone through different components of soft power diplomacy between India and Iran. A critical evaluation of soft power diplomacy between the two countries in the context of the rising necessity of military and strategic diplomacy owing on account of major power involvement in this context has been analysed.

Chapter- V: - External Factors and India-Iran Bilateral Relations.

This chapter has elaborated and examined the role of external power and their involvement in the core areas of security and economic interest affecting the bilateral relations between the two countries. The role of US, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Pakistan, Afghanistan and China has been analysed in detail in this chapter.

Chapter VI: Challenges to India-Iran Relations.

There are many challenges faced by India in pursuing her policy towards Iran. Iran has been insensitive to many issues, which are of great concern to India. The

Bilateral relations between India and Iran have been subject to numerous challenges and limitations coming out of the volatile nature of geopolitics involving great powers and regional power competitions to have their foothold.

Conclusion: The concluding chapter has analysed the findings of the proposed research and suggested measures to strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries.

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India-Iran Strategic and Economic Relations (1991-2022) Introduction Introduction In the field of International Relations, the term "strategic and economic relations" encompasses the various ways in which nations engage with one another, taking into account both security issues and economic transactions. These two aspects are essential to understanding state behaviour within the global arena. Strategic relations pertain to the connections established between states aimed at mutual protection. This can manifest through military alliances, defence collaborations, deterrence tactics, or calculations related to power dynamics. Such relationships align with realist theory, emphasising the quest for security amid a chaotic international landscape. The nature of "Strategic Relations" is characterised by assessments of threats, arms races, collective security agreements, and the deployment of military force or coercion as instruments of diplomacy. To uphold their sovereignty, safeguard crucial interests, and enhance their relative power against possible threats, states engage in strategic actions. Economic Relations encompass trade, investments, financial exchanges, and the economic interdependence among nations. The liberal institutionalist perspective emphasises that economic collaboration fosters peace through mutual advantages and interconnected interests. Aspects such as trade agreements, monetary coordination, development assistance, and economic sanctions are categorised under these economic relationships. Nations utilise economic strategies to enhance prosperity, secure resource access, and exert influence without resorting to military means. The relationship between these various dimensions is a subject of theoretical debate. Classical realists view economics primarily in relation to security concerns, whereas liberals argue that economic interdependence can reduce competitive tensions. Constructivists analyse how common norms influence both economic and security cooperation. Contemporary geopolitical economics further elaborates on how states strategically employ economic tools to achieve specific aims, thereby merging conventional distinctions. Recent research increasingly recognises the interconnectedness of these relations. For instance, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) highlights the significance of strategic positioning in economic infrastructure endeavours. Similarly, financial sanctions imposed on Russia demonstrate how economic measures can be weaponised to support security agendas. To fully grasp today's international relations landscape, it is essential to understand the strategic motivations behind economic actions and how these connections either constrain or facilitate strategic choices, reflecting the complex interdependencies that define our modern global environment. The bilateral relations between India and Iran rank among the most complex and intricate relationships in contemporary international relations. The historical backdrop of these interactions is steeped in millennia of inter-civilizational connections, from which a modern partnership has emerged, evolving through various phases of collaboration and constraint influenced by shifting geopolitical, economic, and broader global dynamics. The period from 1991 to 2022 is particularly significant; it began with India's journey towards economic liberalisation following the Cold War and extended through the tumultuous early twenty-first century, characterised by changing global power structures, regional instability, and evolving strategic alliances. The conclusion of the Cold War in 1991, coupled with India's gradual economic reforms, fundamentally transformed the landscape of

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