

INDIA-RUSSIA BILATERAL RELATIONS (2000-2016): AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

Abstract

The year 2017 marked 70 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Russia. The rich history between the two countries and the long-standing cooperative relations between them have often been lauded as unprecedented in the history of bilateral relations. Yet the rapidly changing geopolitical environment of the 21st century has brought about some nuances in the bilateral ties which have also given rise to concerns regarding the ‘time-tested’ nature of the relations. In this context, the thesis provides a brief historical overview of relations and then proceeds to place India-Russia bilateral ties in the context of the current geopolitical realities. Based on an examination of existing literature, various official documents and interviews of various diplomats as well as experts from both Indian and Russian sides, the thesis has analysed the importance of both India and Russia vis-à-vis each other in the 21st century, the issues that are actually helping in sustaining the relationship, the areas in which the relationship seems to be vulnerable and the ways in which these can be worked on. The thesis also argues that though the post-Cold War era has brought about certain changes in the foreign policy orientations of both the countries, there is a lot of goodwill between them which can be attributed to the unprecedented level of mutual trust and faith that have been characterizing their relations ever since the Cold War period. While the shared interests of the two nations remain the same, there has been a change in the content, though, which can be attributed to the geopolitical churn that has taken place in international politics. Yet, the fact that they have been able to survive the treacherous currents of international politics and maintain a stable partnership is quite a commendable achievement. There is also a clear commitment on part of both the nations to preserve their ‘Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership’ and hence it would be an exaggeration to say that the ties are in a downward spiral.