

Title of the Research-

**ANALYSIS OF INDIA-AFGHANISTAN RELATIONS: IN THE  
CONTEXT OF INDIA'S EXTENDED NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY  
(2001-2014)**

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## **Introduction**

India and Afghanistan have a strong relationship based on history and cultural links, which suffered a serious setback during Taliban regime. Its post-Taliban period India maintained excellent relations with Rabbani led Afghan government. Both these countries relations have been more strengthened after fall of Taliban in December 2001. India had an excellent relation with NATO forces in Afghanistan. After the Karzai government came to power in 2004, a major policy shift was introduced in favour of India. The 9/11 terrorist strike on United States make India worried about terror threats which also became a factor of closer India-Afghanistan relations. There also exists a high-level political engagement with Afghanistan through bilateral high-level visit. India's former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Afghanistan in 2008 after 29 years of Indira Gandhi's visit. From the beginning of new government India is the only Asian country that has come out with an open offer of aid and assistance to develop Afghanistan. India's relations with Afghanistan have grown into multi-sectoral activities in all parts of Afghanistan giving due respect to priorities of the Afghan government and people. India is one of the largest providers of economic assistance and spending huge amount of money in support for reconstruction projects and development aid to Afghanistan. India is involved in long term projects such as electricity, road development, parliament building construction and agriculture etc. Even Afghan president Hamid Karzai has acknowledged India's contribution towards Afghanistan's reconstruction process. In 2007 India initiated in the move to make Afghanistan a member of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) with the hope of free flow of goods across borders in the region. In 2011 India signed a strategic partnership treaty with Afghanistan, which accelerates the relation between these two states, which is already showing results and visibility

India supported the Heart of Asia Initiative to attract finance and investment from across the world for Afghanistan. India's growing relation since 2001 towards Afghanistan has many reasons. The Indian government has expressed an interest to establish Afghanistan as a land bridge between India and Central Asia. India's interest in Turkmenistan- Afghanistan- Pakistan- India (TAPI) gas pipeline is also predicated upon stability and security in Afghanistan. Today India has a very legitimate and intense interest in this region. Some

countries like, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kirghizstan are now very important in India's Central policy to fulfil its economic interest and energy demand.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Pant (2014) discuss about few key issues between India- Afghanistan relations since 2001. After the installations of Afghan Interim authority in 2001, India immediately upgrades its representation and also started a large number of projects. In 2011 India, Pakistan and Afghanistan signed a trade and transit agreement which allow India to use Pakistan's territory to access Afghanistan through land road. After the death of Osama bin Laden, India adopted a new policy to engage with Afghanistan. India's former Prime Minister Manmohon Singh announced a fresh commitment of \$500 million dollar in development projects. The author argues that India should be proactive in its Afghan policy. To gaining access to the energy rich Central Asia, prevent Pakistan and Taliban, India needs to be more active. India has the chance to do some heavy lifting and with growing economy it should emerged as natural partner for Afghanistan, which will preserve its vital interest.

Trivedi (2008) briefly discussed about India –Afghanistan relations since 2001. He mentions three factors which effected in Indo-Afghan relations. The first one is energy factor, second is the Taliban factors and third one is Pakistan factor. According to him economically Afghanistan is a gateway for India to access oil and mineral rich Central Asia. After the 9/11 incident, because of its geo-strategic locations Afghanistan remained in the Indian regional policy. After the collapse of Taliban, India has started a strategy to isolate Pakistan from Afghan politics. He argues that there is a felt a need to be cautions in India-Afghan policy, because over-enthusiasm can be result in an adverse way.

Ved (2005) explains the role of Pakistan in Indo-Afghan relations, according to him in 2013 India focussed on gaining physical access through several Central Asian countries, creating conditions for an economic presence in Kabul. He mentions Pakistan as a key factor in India-Afghanistan relations since 2001. India's diplomatic expansion has had a threat for Pakistan. India and Afghanistan sharing much more good relations compare to the Afghan- Pak relations, it seems Afghanistan is a neighbour of India, distanced by Pakistan. He argues that before fall of Taliban era Pakistan played more crucial role then India did. The author mentions only Pakistan would be able to play a security role by virtue of its vast border with Afghanistan. India needs to establish much greater interaction on the entire question of transnational gas pipe line (TAPI).

Chandra (2007) analysis India-Afghanistan relations in the economic perspective. According to him Afghanistan is a natural resource rich country, including natural gas, petroleum, coal, sulphur, lead etc. To boost Indo- Afghan trade and commerce India signed PTA on 23rd March 2003 and reopened its consulate in Kandahar on 15th December 2002. For smooth economic relations India signed a MoU, in the field of civil aviation on 25th February 2005. From 2006 India upgrading the public transportation facility of Kabul and other cities and also started working on various projects. Mr Chandra argues that India continues its efforts to rebuild Afghanistan to fulfil her economic necessity. To fulfil her economic goal India expands its investments in wide range of sectors including hydro-electricity, agriculture, education, industry and health in Afghanistan.

Anand (2010) discusses about new Afghan-Pak strategy of Obama administration and implication for India. According to him withdrawal of coalition forces since 2014 create a power vacuum and Islamic extremism will be out of Afghan- Pak region, would be mostly felt in India. India's forces should take effective steps to protect the country from Talibanization. He argues that it is the actual time for India to consider options, not only engage in development assistance to Afghanistan but guarding against increasing radicalization in Pakistan. India should take few effective actions in defining core strategic interest in Afghanistan, which will protect this country to become a heaven of terrorist.

Debata (2011) explains India's policy towards Afghanistan. He mentions few key factors in Indo- Afghan relations since 2001 to 2014, these are, security interest, economic interest, China factor. According to him India could be a suitable replacement of the US in Afghanistan, which would change the current calculus of terror groups. India can place the issue of stabilizing Afghanistan on the agenda of peace dialogue with Pakistan. He argues that helping Karzai against Pakistan's sinister designs in the region will be one of the options to further India's strategic interests in the region and its security interests at home.

Dutta (2009) explains about the India's development assistance towards Afghanistan since 2001. She categorised six components of these development, these are social development, infrastructure development, capacity building development, economic development, contribution of reconstruction process and technology and scientific upgradation. According to her security is the big issue between Indo- Afghan relations, because India's projects in Afghanistan are targeting by several terror groups. The author mentions that Afghan elections were crucial for Indian government. After the long journey finally, India got her friendly

president Hamid Karzai, who officially declared as President on 2004. In his term India's assistance in Afghanistan gets the momentum. Author argues that terror attacks on Mumbai, which known as 26/ 11 alert India to make deep linkage with Afghanistan to prevent Pakistan's terror groups from using Afghan soil. Indian policy needs to help and trained such militant groups who are already fighting against Taliban.

## **Objective of the Study**

In the backdrop of the above discussion the proposed study attempts to make a comprehensive understanding on the ongoing relations between India and Afghanistan after fall of Taliban. The study aims to look into the following components.

1. To find out the reasons behind two countries increasing bilateral relations in the post-Taliban period.
3. To examine Afghanistan role and support towards India's counter terrorism policy.
4. To access the role of Pakistan in India- Afghanistan relations
5. To find out the Afghanistan's role in India's economic and energy requirements from the Central Asian region.
6. To find out the prospects for future improvement of the relations between India and Afghanistan.

## **Research Questions**

1. What are the reasons behind India's strategic engagement with Afghanistan?
2. Does Afghanistan have the potential and willingness to prevent anti-Indian terrorism?
3. Does Afghanistan serve as a gateway for India's greater economic engagement in Central Asia?
4. How far the energy resources influence in India-Afghanistan relations?
5. What role India and Afghanistan to play to counter Pakistan's destabilising role in both India-Afghanistan.

## **Limitation of The Study:**

As discussed already, the present study is on the bilateral relations between India and Afghanistan during post-Taliban era (2001-2014). Here, an attempt has been made to trace the historical linkages between India and Afghanistan during pre-independence era and during cold war period also. The main focus of the study on the relations between India and Afghanistan during post-Taliban period (2001-2014). It is not focuses on recent changes of the bilateral relations under present NDA Government.

## **Methodology**

The study primarily is based on both secondary and primary sources. The nature of this study is descriptive, comparative and analytical. Primary sources are mainly focused on government data, and various documents on trade and treaties. Secondary sources of data are includes from books, journals, library and online documents.

## **Research Design**

### Introduction

Geo-economic considerations are an explicit element of India's concerns in its extended neighbourhood concept. There is a sense that South Asia, India's immediate neighbourhood, is too small an economic space for India. Such economic considerations have been further strengthened under the Congress Government of India, where the Manmohan Doctrine emphasizes economic development as a driver for foreign policy, in shaping India's strength, interests and relationships. In such an economic vein, Manmohan Singh explained that "our approach to the wider Asian neighbourhood has been so influenced by economic factors."

A southerly implementation of India's extended neighbourhood drive has become well established throughout much of the Indian Ocean and its littoral, where India's strategic "footprint" is becoming noticeable.<sup>30</sup> Maritime means and Mahanian "visions" shape this strategic drive by India.<sup>31</sup> This outreach had been quickly enunciated by the BJP government, its Ministry of Defence Annual Report announcing in 2001 that "given its size, location, trade links and extensive Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), India's security environment extends from the Persian Gulf in the west to the Straits of Malacca in the east . . . to the Equator in the south"; and was something to be safeguarded by the presence of the Indian navy.

'Extended Neighbourhood' has been variously defined in geographical terms. It includes countries sharing land and maritime borders whose list goes beyond the geographical description of South Asia; apart from Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, countries sharing land and maritime borders with India are China, Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

### Chapter 1: **India–Afghanistan Relations: Historical Perspectives.**

Historically India and Afghanistan share deep linkages. The ancient Hindu kingdom of Gandhara may have covered the present Kabul. This chapter tries to draw a picture of healthy bilateral relations. In 1947 India's segment made it lose the topographical contiguity with Afghanistan be that as it may India delighted in great relations with Afghanistan but amid the Taliban period whereas Pakistan incorporates a long border geological vicinity ethnic and devout partiality its relations with Afghanistan have been seen with doubt customarily.

Since India's independence and with the birth of Pakistan the former lost direct contact with Afghanistan but the geographical significance got lost lessened. It only exhumed a different shape in the changed circumstances. The partition of India had its self-caused wider spread disturbances in the subcontinent and from the very beginning an atmosphere of hatred and jealousy prevailed between India and Pakistan. After the war, however, the India-Afghanistan trade registered a sharp decline. As a first step towards reviving the trade, the Indo-Afghan Treaty of Friendship was signed in January 1950, which contained references to the development of trade and cooperation between the two countries. These were further substantiated by a Treaty of Trade and Commerce signed in New Delhi on April 4, 1950. The Treaty provided for the most favoured nation treatment to the nationals of both countries in matters relating to commerce, industry, trade and insurance in the territory of each other.

### Chapter 2: **Towards Strategic Partnership**

Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) between India and Afghanistan has a vast scope of partnership which includes political and security cooperation; trade and economic cooperation; capacity building and programme development and education; social, cultural, civil-society and people- to-people relations. This is first such document between two nations which focuses on wide areas.

India's strategic partnership agreement is more than just that as it aims to propel the relationship beyond a mere aid-donor equation to a much higher plane with training of the Afghan National

Security Forces. India sees a strong, independent, stable, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan as being critical to her security interests and for overall stability of the region in the evolving geo-political and geo-strategic scenarios. It also includes coping with "acts of terrorism. Even though Karzai made his remark that the agreement with India will not affect Pakistan. Pakistan views India as trying to isolate Pakistan through this agreement which is bound to cause serious discomfort to Pakistan.

India's contribution in the war against terrorism was guided by her long-term national interest in Asian continent and India's preferred strategy seems aimed at reconciliation and stability, thus allowing it to play a predestined role as a global power. This policy is favoured by the major national political actor. The prospect of India's peaceful and strategic engagement with Afghanistan is revolving around the withdrawal of US-led coalition forces from Afghanistan. India's choices are limited. India should refrain from getting bogged down in Afghanistan but should pursue quiet diplomacy involving all sections of the people. Building on the good work it has done during the last few years in Afghanistan, India should leverage its soft power in building capacities in Afghanistan. One important element of Indian policies should be to establish and maintain contacts with the youth of Afghanistan and facilitate their coming to India for education and skill building. For the moment, India should watch the situation and await opportunities where it can be more useful.

### **Chapter 3: Economic Dimensions in India-Afghanistan relations**

This chapter presents the findings of the study as analysed in the proceeding chapters. The challenges and opportunities of India and Afghanistan in the process of economic integration in South Asia region are presented. The study highlights the fact that, it is both countries in to achieve high level of economic relation and connectivity through Afghanistan given the geo-political and geo-strategic context. Indeed, both India and Afghanistan have been working for better economic involvement in the bilateral level as well as in the regional integration process. India's connectivity with Central Asian important and where Afghanistan is critical link in this process. The challenges are facing India and Afghanistan in terms to develop the trade relations. Economic involvement of India and Afghanistan is growing but not in the larger amount of trade in terms. The less visibility of the trade relation between both countries is responsible for the lack of land connectivity. Pakistan is the mid-way between both states, although, Afghanistan and Pakistan are members of the trade and transit agreement, but the same agreement is not flexible for India. Thus, India is working with Pakistan to allow the same



route to Indian exporters to export their products to Afghanistan, and the other best alternative route for India is to access the third country through the Chabahar port of Iran.

#### **Chapter 4: India's Energy interest in Central Asia and Afghanistan's role**

Afghanistan is a pivotal actor for India to connect with Central Asia for its energy demand. Afghanistan is not only India but also important for whole of South Asia to cement the bridge with Central Asia. In this context, the approach of India's engagement with Central Asia is quite optimistic, which is emphasised on the development of a proactive and meaningful policy that accords top priority to the region. To engage with Central Asia without Afghanistan is impossible for India, however, access to Central Asia is required to develop stability with Afghanistan and hold a good relationship with the Afghan government.

The struggle for Central Asia oil is a multifaceted Great Game in the region. It involves security, geopolitics and economic interest not only for Russia, Chinese and other neighbours like Pakistan and Iran and Afghanistan but also for America and European as well. It appears that the United States is planning to be the oil world for the long haul and China moving to expand its influence using Pakistan and Iran. But India has a different approach to dealing with, though India is interested in the energy resources of Central Asia but still India is playing the Soft Power card through its political diplomacy and engagement in various developmental projects to fulfil its energy demand.

#### **Conclusion**

The finding concluding observation has been mentioned. The nature and process of these bilateral relations and recommendations for better and smooth engagement are mentioned. Some of the in Recommendations as follows:

1. To make India's soft power more effective in both Afghanistan and Central Asia people to people contact should be reflected in the bilateral relations.
2. India should continue to focus on strengthening Afghanistan's state-building process.
3. Rather being obsessed with the Taliban Factor India should take a long-term view of the Afghan crisis, and its reconstruction process.
4. India should engage with different ethnic groups in Afghanistan including Pashtuns and actors in Afghanistan even with the Taliban.