

India's Foreign Policy

[UPSC Notes]

India's Foreign Policy visualizes widening its domain of influence, enhancing its function across countries, and making its existence seem like budding supremacy. Indian foreign policy is responsible for shaping distinct portions of the country, comprising economy, topography, history, and even culture & ethos. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, facilitated the country's foreign policy modeling.

India's Foreign Policy is an important topic for the UPSC Exam under International Relations. The article covers all the important aspects of India's Foreign Policy, such as the primary objectives, basic principles, etc. the article also sheds light on the Panchsheel, NAM, Gujral Doctrine, etc.

What Is India's Foreign Policy?

Like many other nations, Indian foreign policy is a comprehensive set or group of political aspirations defining how the country will network and deal with other nations worldwide. Implementing the foreign policy includes expanding political, social, cultural, trade, and defense relations with other countries and participating in multi-tangential discussions encompassing many countries. While executing the Indian foreign policy, the country aspired to preserve a few specific objectives, including world peace, independence for Asian and African countries, and decommissioning because they played a vital role in India's Independence.

The opportunities and associates in the International System have put India's foreign policy in check. Moreover, in the past few decades, India has taken up an additional affluent foreign policy that comprises the SAARC-embodied, neighborhood-first approach and the Look East strategy to develop a more widespread economic and tactical cooperation with other East-Asian nations.

India respected the sovereignty of all the other countries to attain security by upholding harmony and reconciliation in its conduct of foreign associations. India's national and international dynamics, such as scarcity

of resources and financial dependency on other economically powerful countries, have significantly affected India's foreign policy.

Primary Objectives Of Indian Foreign Policy

Maintaining international harmony and security, opposing colonialism, propagating the peaceful and radical resolution of international disagreements, fostering pacific co-existence, remaining non-associated and non-obligated, and maintaining the unity and harmony of the Third World are some of the aims of Indian foreign policy.

It includes eliminating colonialism & cultural discrimination and protecting the interests of Indian-origin people in foreign countries. India's foreign policy's primary objectives are:

- To Preserve India's national integrity and impartiality of foreign policies.
 - This objective is to maintain the nation's territorial integrity and protect national borders from foreign hostility or violence. India's foreign policy's objective also includes achieving Afro-Asian harmony and encouraging non-interference principles in any other nation's domestic or national affairs. And the adoption of a non-alignment policy is also a part of this objective.
 - It is also observed that in recent years, foreign policy has adopted a methodology of combining economic and political international relations. The reason behind this approach is to maintain the nation's growth curve. And for this, India must network with its foreign associates to bring Foreign Direct Investments, economic aid, and transmission of technology for its several national schemes and programs such as Skills India, Clean India, Smart Cities, Digital India, etc.
 - Moreover, India comprises the most extensive diaspora globally; approximately 20 million people of Indian Origin live in foreign countries and are reached all over the states. Therefore, engaging them and deriving maximum benefits from their existence in foreign countries also becomes the primary objective, along with protecting their security to the possible extent.
- To protect international peace and security.

- India has comprehended the relationship between international peace and national development as a recently independent and emerging nation.
- Its emphasis on demilitarisation and the strategy of retaining military treaties also reflects its intentions to encourage global peace.
- To attain India's economic development:
 - The steadfast development of the nation and reinforcement of democracy and freedom in the country was the elementary requirements during the independence period.
 - India stood back from the power federation political beliefs, outlining characteristics of Cold War worldwide politics. India did this to acquire financial and technological resources from both blockades and to cluster its energy on the nation's development.

Indian Foreign Policy: Fundamental Principles

The core principles of India's foreign policy have withstood the torment of time and are deeply rooted in transnational laws and India's practice in foreign policy.

- **Gujral Doctrine:** Indian foreign policy reached a new milestone with Gujral Doctrine. It was started in 1996 during the Deve Gowda Government by Inder Kumar Gujral, Minister of External Affairs. It is a group of five principles guiding India's foreign relations with bordering neighbors.
- **Connect Central Asia Policy:** This policy was formed to counter china's domination in central Asia and tap the natural resources of the central Asia region. It covers critical issues like political cooperation, regional connectivity, strategic cooperation, economic cooperation, etc.
- **Look East Policy:** Indian Government launched the Look East Policy under the leadership of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. This policy aimed to develop security, political, and economic cooperation with nations in Southeastern Asia.

India's foreign policy has five core principles.

1. Panchsheel

- Panchsheel is a co-relation of five ideologies for international relations, including Non- violence, Non-interference, Peaceful co-existence, Equivalence & mutual benefits, and Mutual respect's regional integrity and dominion.
 - Policymakers in India understood the connection between the country's development, peace, and endurance of humanity. They knew that socio-economic development would be pushed to the backdrop in the absence of global peace.
 - They understood the importance of resilient world peace for a nation. Jawahar Lal Nehru, the initiator of India's foreign policy, prioritized global peace while designing foreign policy.
 - Panchsheel is referred to as the 5 Ethics of Peaceful Co-existence. It was employed in 1954 and has become a supervisory principle of India's mutual relations with other nations.
2. Non-Alignment Policy
- It is one of the essential principles and features of Indian foreign policy. It defines the core factor of India maintaining impartiality in foreign affairs by not connecting to military alliances that the United States of America and the Soviet Union have made.
 - Moreover, these alliances came out as a foremost standpoint of Cold War politics post Second World War and India wanted to avoid this.
 - Non-alignment principle in India's foreign policy was a constructive and dynamic thought instead of impartiality, non-intervention, or separateness.
 - It states making a self-determining standpoint on international matters as per the distinctions of each case; however, at the same time, it is not devoted to getting influenced by any military alliance.
 - Additionally, the principle of Non-Alignment secured great recognition in many other developing nations. In this way, not joining any military and superpower alliances became essential for many countries to maintain the autonomy of Foreign Policy.
 - Moreover, in 1947, under the guidance and direction of Jawaharlal Nehru, India managed to organize the Asian Relations Conference to shape the vision of Asian solidarity.
3. Anti-Colonialism, Racism, and Imperialism

- India strongly believed in maintaining equality for humankind. Also, the Indian foreign policy was shaped during the independence struggle against colonial rule and the ills of colonialism and discrimination.
 - India remained a victim of colonialism and imperialism for an extended period, so it contemplates these as a danger to global peace and security.
 - This principle of Indian foreign policy opposes all racial discrimination and imperialism. In addition to opposing racism and colonialism, India was the first-ever nation to raise the issue of Apartheid in the United Nations in 1946. India also raised its voice and organized an Asian Relations Conference for the independence of Indonesia.
 - Fourteen African countries were released from the encumbrance of colonization in 1964 only because of persistent endeavors through Non-Alignment Mission.
 - India sharply disapproved the wicked apartheid policy exercised in South Africa. In 1949, India detached all its political associations with South Africa and used its influence to apply a comprehensive agreement against the white subgroup racist Government of South Africa.
4. Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes
- India's persistent belief in peacefully settling international clashes is one of the essential elements in Indian foreign policy. The Indian constitution and the Charter of the UN also comprise this principle.
 - Furthermore, India has played a primary role in resolving the Korean conflicts and encouraged peaceful settlement of the Palestine issue, borderline issues with neighboring nations, and other such struggles and issues.
 - India has always been against foreign military interference in solving global problems, and this principle is the foundation of India's foreign policy.
 - Currently, India has favored the resolution of Iranian nuclear issues' democratic upsurge problem in the middle east and many more with the strategy of a peaceful settlement.
5. Foreign Economic Aid
- As a sovereign nation, India also had a profound respect for the international laws and ideologies of self-governing equality of

countries and non- intrusion in other countries' domestic affairs promoted by the United Nations.

- India played a fundamental role in preserving global peace by adding to the decolonization sovereign and active involvement in United Nations' pacification activities.
- India has also sustained the cause of demilitarisation practiced by the United Nations. India suggested a very determined program of nuclear demilitarization even before the UN in 1988.
- Even though the UN members haven't accepted this suggestion, India's opinions are still committed to the Origin of universal demilitarisation.

Furthermore, India has suggested and backed the reorganization of the Security Council and UN societies to formulate the configuration of the Security Council as more genuine and independent. Therefore, India is among the applicants for perpetual members of the Security Council.

Nuclear Doctrine of India and Nuclear Command Authority

India's Nuclear Doctrine is established on the principle of only using any nuclear weapon in a situation to combat any nation's attempt to attack India with nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, a Nuclear Doctrine generally states how a nation or state with nuclear powers uses them in peace and during war.

India's Nuclear Doctrine is based on three essential pillars: No first use, Civilian control (NCA), and Credible minimum deterrence.

Additionally, India's Nuclear Doctrine has the following five features:

- First, India's nuclear powers will only be used to combat any nuclear attack on India. It is also known as the No First Use Policy.
- It states that India's nuclear weapons are absolutely for deterrence, and India will simply follow the "retaliation only" policy.
- Civilian political leadership will only exercise power to mandate nuclear retaliation in India.
- The Indian Government will not counter with corrective retaliation when deterrence fails.
- India will never use nuclear power against nations without nuclear powers.

Nuclear Command Authority (NCA)

India's authority is accountable for making command, control, and operational decisions concerning the nuclear power program. The NCA comprises the Political and Executive Council.

Indian Foreign Policy: Essential Features

There are three basic features of India's foreign policy, comprising a few of its fundamental principles.

- **Panchsheel:** It is one of the basic features of Indian foreign policy that defines five concepts, including mutual non-aggression, non-interference, and peaceful co-existence of international relationships. Also, it defines Equivalence & mutual benefits, and Mutual respect's regional integrity and dominion. Typically, these elements of panchsheel aim for mutual and peaceful diplomatic relations between nations.
- **Non-Aligned:** It is the essential feature of Indian foreign policy that aims to keep federal interference in foreign affairs by not opting to join military alliances created by the USA and the Soviet Union. Instead, it proposes making an independent standpoint on foreign matters based on the evidence of the circumstances.
- **Strengthening of UN:** India has deemed the UN the most dependable source for achieving global peace and diplomatic revolution. Along with this, India has anticipated the UN to dynamically retain nations in discussions or conferences to aid them in settling their issues.