



## Roots of Indian Foreign Policy

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**Abstract:** *India is a biggest country with its own unique history. Governance, democracy, secularism, non-violence, humanity, morality, culture etc., these are roots of India from ancient times to till today. Today, India is having high status and respect in its own rights at the international level. The main reason is Indian foreign policy has its superiority is because of the important roots of foreign policy followed from ancient times to till date. This article focuses with the policies followed by the kings of the ruling dynasties in the history of India with other countries. If country with a good history can emerge as a strong nation in all aspects. The policies followed in history are the main reason to India is a strong country today. Also the contribution and role of many great people in India's foreign policy can never be forgotten. India is playing its own important role in today's international politics. India has been doing its own international politics since time immemorial. India is successfully managing international politics today. The main reason for this is the foreign policy followed in the past. The main objective of this paper is to explain systematically and discuss the manner in which India's foreign policy has evolved. Many kings and politicians have laid a solid foundation for India's foreign policy by making their own contributions. In particular, the philosophies of Emperor Ashoka and Mahatma Gandhi, the contributions of Jawaharlal Nehru and the role of the Congress Party all formed the basis of India's foreign policy. India's foreign policy is a model foreign policy. Because India's foreign policy is instrumental in finding solutions to world problems. An attempt has been made in this paper to clearly, systematically, succinctly and simply convey the success of India's foreign policy.*

**Key Words:** *Secularism, Non-violence, Humanity, Morality, Culture, History, Philosophies.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

India has its biggest own history, heritage and culture. India has always been a rich country and because of that many foreigners have attacked India and looted the wealth. Also, it can be seen in history that some foreigners stayed in India and did business as well as running their own administration. Apart from all that, Indian royal families have successfully resisted the attacks of foreigners. Many of the kings of India have successfully maintained trade deals with foreigners by maintaining good governance and friendly relations. The origins of India's foreign policy can be traced back to ancient times. A country foreign policy and external supremacy are described in Buddhist literature and in *Kautilya's Arthashastra* in the Saptanga Siddanta's limb 'Mitra'. Balance of power between nations is described in Mandala theory. *Tipu Sultan* of Mysore had sought the help of *Napoleon Bonaparte* of France to fight against the British. All these events are important historical instances of foreign policy in ancient India.

### 2. Kautilya's Foreign Policy:

*Kautilya* said that, by providing necessary facilities for sea trade navigation, the government can earn more revenue from it. He also said that taxes should be levied on merchants, tourists, and others. A king should give first priority to developing the economic life of his subjects. Because poverty is the root cause of revolutions, he said that '*the worst thing is the poverty of the people*'. When people suffer financially, people become suffered lot by king. There should be spies in foreign countries too, they should give information about the conditions there. That means it helps to know what kind of thinking they have about their country. *Kautilya* has said many ideas about the foreign policy that this will be beneficial in the interest of the country's security.



### **3. Foreign trade policy of the Mauryan period:**

During the *Mauryan* period, India had direct trade links with *Syria*, *Egypt* and the Greek states of the west. There were trade links between India and Rome as early as the first century BC. Indian sailors bravely and adventurously embarked on trade voyages to distant lands. Fine muslin cloth, rich perfumes and other yogic paraphernalia were exported to the West from the Gangetic region. Trade relations between India and the West increased due to the discovery of direct waterways by a man named '*Hippalus*' in the first century.

### **4. Foreign policy of Emperor Ashoka period:**

*Ashoka* maintained close relations with many countries. *Ashoka* had close relations with many countries. He was on good terms with *Antiochus* of *Syria*, *Ptolemy II Philadelphus* of *Egypt*, *Megas* of *Cyrene*, *Antigonus Gonatus* of *Macedonia*, *Alexander* of *Epirus* etc. *Ashoka* sent Buddhist missionaries to *Sri Lanka* and *Suvarnabhumi*. '*Tissa*', the king of *Ceylon*, named himself '*Devanampriya*' in honor of *Ashoka* and sent his ambassador to *Pataliputra*.

#### **Ashoka's principle of non-violence:**

*Ashoka* was heartbroken by the calamity that followed the *Kalinga war*. Hence *Ashoka* decided to prevent war and declared that he did not wish to commit such acts of destruction. However, he said that it was his duty as a king to keep his army always ready to cover such invasions, internal rebellions and battles. It may be noted that *Ashoka* declared that he was first a king and then a Buddhist. That is *Ashoka* believed that secularism was the first priority, followed by religion. *Ashoka* did not follow a policy of aggression. Unlike his grandfather *Chandragupta Maurya*, he did not want to wage aggressive war to expand his sovereignty. Instead of winning the war, he tried to establish himself as the emperor of an unbroken India by winning hearts.

### **5. Foreign policy of British rule:**

The foreign policy followed by the Government of India was dictated by the British Government. The British government's aim was to protect the Indian Empire and to expand its British commercial and other economic interests in Africa and Asia. It also brought the Indian government into conflict with other European sovereign nations who wanted to expand territorial ownership and trade in the country. In order to protect the Indian Empire and promote British economic interests, the British Government of India was thus motivated to attack India's immediate neighbors, meaning that India's relationship with its neighbors ultimately depended on the requirements of British sovereignty. India had to fight many wars against its neighbors to support British interests. A country's foreign policy represents that country's external sovereignty and independence. After independence from British colonialism, India adopted its own independent foreign policy as a sovereign nation.

### **6. Constitutional basis:**

India's foreign policy is also mentioned in the Constitution of India. The constitution lays down what the foreign policy should be and how it should be implemented. The Constituent Assembly of India discussed India's foreign policy and was given constitutional support through Article 51 in the List of State Directive Principles. According to Article 51 of the Constitution of India, India shall respect international law in its foreign affairs and settle world disputes through peaceful means. Several ideas of settling disputes with neighboring countries through discussion, negotiation and negotiation can be found in the Constitution of India.

### **7. Cooperation in South Asia:**

India intends to maintain cordial friendly relations and cooperation with South Asian countries. India is creating an atmosphere of mutual cooperation with South Asian countries. It aims to free the neighboring countries from the interference of external powers and protect the interest of those countries. *Nehru's* attempt was to block the naval operations of foreign powers to make the Indian Ocean region a peace zone. India has always pursued a foreign policy of maintaining good relations with its neighbors.



## 8. Ideal principles of Mahatma Gandhi:

India's foreign policy is based on *Mahatma Gandhi's* principles of peace and non-violence. India succeeded in achieving national independence by using two powerful weapons "peace and non-violence". India's foreign policy is formulated and implemented on the basis of these principles. India has introduced the importance of these principles to the world through its foreign policy. Therefore, the United Nations declared October 2, the birthday of *Mahatma Gandhi* as the "International Day of Non-Violence". India has adopted *Gandhiji's* ideals in its foreign policy and earned its own respect at the international level. *Gandhiji's* ideals are essential principles for today's world. India has contributed to the world through its foreign policy the ideals of *Gandhiji* to lead a peaceful and harmonious life for the entire human race.

## 9. Role of Jawaharlal Nehru's:

One of the foremost leaders of the world *Jawaharlal Nehru* laid the foundation for India's foreign policy. Nehru's contribution or role in today's independent and competent foreign policy making in India is immense. Nehru laid the foundation for India's progress in scientific fields while formulating foreign policy and internal policy. After the formation of the Interim Government in India in September 1946, India took many steps to establish friendly relations with all countries. In early 1947 the Conference on Asian Relations was convened at Delhi. The principles of India's foreign policy were announced at this conference. In the 1938 Haripur Congress session, India decided to pursue an independent foreign policy without any influence or pressure from England or any other country.

Although *Nehru* was influenced by Western thought, apart from communism, socialist thought was adopted in foreign policy. *Nehru's* thought was that if Russian socialist principles and formulas were adopted rapid economic progress would be achieved. Then he adopted a foreign policy to have good relations with the West and communist countries for the development of India after its independence from the British. That is a policy of favoring financial aid and trade agreements was followed by Western and socialist countries as well.

*Nehru* opposed the US bloc's NATO, SEETO, CENTO and Russia's Warsaw military alliances. India has not signed up to any of the bloc's military alliances. India did not want to join any faction because the factional countries give importance to their personal political interest; the factional countries create fear of war and create unrest instead of peace. Regarding India's foreign policy it cannot be mistaken that the sapling planted by *Nehru* back then is proudly bearing good fruits for Indians today. Due to *Nehru* laying a good foundation for building a strong India, rapid development has been achieved today. Thus *Nehru* has made immense contribution to India's foreign policy.

## 10. Role of Indian National Congress:

The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 with the sole aim of winning independence for India. Later it took its own decisions on many other issues. In its first session, the Congress passed a resolution opposing the British attack on Burma. In 1892, the Indian National Congress condemned all military operations by the British in Indian territory. In 1904, it strongly opposed the use of Indian land to attack Tibet, Afghanistan and other countries. It was through the INC that a resolution was passed and a message was sent in support of the Irish freedom struggle. A foreign affairs department was established within the Indian National Congress under the leadership of *Mahatma Gandhi, Rajagopalachari, V. K. Krishnamainan and Manohar Lohia*. *Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru* served as its head. *Nehru's* experience as the head of the foreign affairs department of the Congress enabled him to carry out the foreign policy role of independent India efficiently and effectively.

Later Indians led by the Congress began to take a more active and pronounced interest in foreign affairs. At the Delhi Conference (1923) an important historical decision was taken that the foreign policy pursued by the British Government in India would not represent the decision of Indians anywhere. Successive resolutions against British imperialism in India were passed in subsequent conferences of the Indian National Congress. *Nehru's* participation in the Anti-Imperialist League conference held in Brussels (1927) became an important milestone in India's foreign policy.

## 11. CONCLUSION:

Thus India's foreign policy has its own foundation or background. Considering all the above factors, India's foreign policy is not an immediate one. Indian heritage, culture and contributions of many individuals have contributed to the evolution of India's foreign policy. Due to all these reasons India's foreign policy has been formed today which is



independent, clear, precise and positive in purpose. For that reason, it is a matter of happiness that today's Indian leaders are successfully managing India's foreign policy. It is the duty of Indians or Indian leaders to pursue India's foreign policy on the basis of the above principles. It is necessary for India to find solutions to many problems of the world through its foreign policy and to maintain world peace. India needs to gain many statuses and opportunities in international politics. In this regard, India needs to continue its foreign policy successfully.

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