

DIPLOMATIC HISTORY OF INDIA FROM 1947 TO 2000 A.D. (18 BHI 54C)

Unit 2

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1 Diplomatic Relation with China – Tibetan Issue

India was having cordial relations with China from time immemorial. It had flourishing commercial contact. The spread of Buddhism in China enhanced the prestige of India. The Kuomintang leader Chiang Kai Sheik supported India's freedom movement. When there was a civil war in China between the Kuomintang and communists India maintained neutrality. In 1949 Communist China won the war. India recognised the government headed by Mao Tse Tung.

Period of Peace and Cordiality (1950 - 1960)

India was the first non-communist country which recognised communist China. In the security council of UNO India fought for the place of communist China.

In 1950 the Chinese army invaded Tibet. Independent Tibet was annexed by China by aggressive war. Anyhow in 1954 India accepted the sovereignty of China over Tibet.

Panchasheela is another principle which brought India and China nearer to each other. In 1954 Prime Minister Nehru and Chinese Prime Minister Chow-En-lai signed this agreement of peace and friendship.

1. The nations should recognise the sovereignty and territorial integrity of others.
2. Non-aggression
3. Non-interference with the internal affairs.
4. Equality
5. Peaceful co-existence.

After that China was allowed to have trade centres at Delhi, Calcutta, Calimang etc in India. India was allowed to open a trade centre at Gangtok of Tibet. India refused to become a member of the SEATO, the anti-communist organisation created by America. In international issues India maintained neutrality. Between 1950-55 Korean war India's stand was appreciated by China. With regard to Apartheid and cultural aspects both have uniform stands. In the Bandung conference of 1955 both the countries worked in union with each other.

Differences

There are some differences between India and China. The five-year plans and India's progress and development made China to be an enemy of India. China's great leap forward scheme met with a failure. In 1959 the Tibetans rose in rebellion against the Chinese

government. China suppressed that by force. The arrival of Dalai Lama into India as refugee and India's stand on it infuriated China.

Border Dispute

China started to give problems in the border areas. Indian territories were shown as Chinese territories in the map. Though China gave an evasive reply at the beginning, finally it stressed that they are Chinese territories. It refused to accept the Mac Mohan line as its border. It also claimed its right over Aghaichin region. In 1959 nine Indians were killed in the border. To reduce the tension both the Prime Ministers met at Delhi. But no decision was arrived at.

Indo Chinese war of 1962

In 1962 China undertook a complete military attack. As it was decided that there will be no possibility of war between India and China, India did not take any serious defense efforts in the north. So India had to retreat. America came to the support of India. Russia maintained neutrality. Then China stopped the war and withdrew from the Indian territories. Countries like Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia etc. supported the stand of India. The Colombo plan was created for peace. India accepted that. But China did not say anything. In the wars of Pakistan with India in 1965 and 1970 China supported the cause of Pakistan and rendered military help.

Peace efforts of India

Though China has opposed India, India still continues to follow the policy of non-alignment. It insisted that communist China should be included in the Security Council. In 1979 the Janatha government wanted to settle the issue. Diplomatic relations were revived among the two countries. The Indian Foreign Minister Vajpayee went to China in 1979 to have peace talks. In 1988 Rajiv Gandhi visited China and brought a turning point.

Tibet Uprising of 1959

- From 1912 until the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, no Chinese government exercised control over what is today China's Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).
- Many Tibetans insist they were essentially independent for most of that time and have protested what they regard as China's rule imposed after the People's Liberation Army occupied TAR in 1950.

- The Dalai Lama's government alone ruled the land until 1951. Tibet was not "Chinese" until Mao Zedong's People's Liberation Army (PLA) marched in and made it so.
- This has often been described by the Tibetan people and third party commentators as "a cultural genocide".
- The unsuccessful Tibetan Uprising of 1959, in which Tibetans rebelled in an attempt to overthrow the Chinese government, led to the fleeing of the 14th Dalai Lama to India.

Aftermath of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising

- Since the 1959 Uprising, the central government of China has been steadily tightening its grip on the Tibet.
- In Tibet today, there is no freedom of speech, religion, or press and arbitrary detainments continue.
- Forced abortion, sterilisation of Tibetan women, and the transfer of low-income Chinese citizens threaten the survival of Tibetan culture.
- Although China has invested in infrastructure improvements for the region, particularly in Lhasa itself, it has also encouraged thousands of ethnic Han Chinese to move to Tibet resulting into demographic shift.
- The 14th Dalai Lama, continues to head the Tibetan government-in-exile from McLeod Ganj, a suburb of Dharamsala, India which coordinates political activities for Tibetans in India.
- Dalai Lama advocates increased autonomy for Tibet, rather than full independence, but the Chinese government generally refuses to negotiate with him.
- Periodic unrest still sweeps through Tibet, especially around important dates such as March 10 to 19 - the anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising.

Sino-Indian Conflict Over Dalai Lama

- Apart from the border disputes, another major irritant for China has been over the Dalai Lama, who enjoys a spiritual status in India.
- China considers Dalai Lama a separatist, who has great influence over Tibetans. It must be mentioned that Dalai Lama gave up his support for Tibetan independence in 1974, and only wants China to stop repression against the community.
- Former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru agreed to provide all assistance to the Tibetan refugees to settle in India until their eventual return.

- The Government of India has built special schools for Tibetans that provide free education, health care, and scholarships. There are a few medical and civil engineering seats reserved for Tibetans.
- While India's role in the rehabilitation of Tibetan refugees has been criticised by China, it has drawn praise from international bodies and human rights groups.

2 Relations with Pakistan

India and Pakistan were born in bloodshed and bred with hostility. With the death of Jinnah in 1948 and the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan in 1952, Indo-Pakistan relations worsened. Partition, transfer of population, problem of minorities, issue of compensation, division of state assets, canal water disputes, boundary 'Controversy, integration of Princely States, and particularly the Kashmir dispute have coloured, conditioned, and complicated Indo-Pakistan relations.

Kashmir Dispute

Ever since the Nehru era, Indo-Pakistan relations has centered around Kashmir dispute. UN debates on the Kashmir issue, UN Security Council resolutions on the dispute, UN Commissions on Kashmir problem, and bilateral talks helped only to fan the imbroglio. Pakistan's defence agreement with the USA (1954), its participation in the Baghdad Pact (CENTO), and strategic proximity to China had made matters worse. "Pakistan became an aberrant regional concern of India's foreign policy".

Indus Waters Treaty

The treaty was signed on September 19, 1960, between India and Pakistan and was brokered by the World Bank. The treaty fixed and delimited the rights and obligations of both countries concerning the use of the waters of the Indus River system. The treaty gave the waters of the western rivers—the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab—to Pakistan and those of the eastern rivers—the Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej—to India. Nehru government played a vital role in this treaty. The treaty was not only about sharing of water but also about maintaining friendship with Pakistan. The treaty survived even after the death of Nehru.

Indira Gandhi

The Indo-Pak War of 1971 brought the relations between the two countries to a breaking point. The 1972 Simla Agreement restored mutual relations. The 1973 Delhi Agreement resolved the issue of repatriation of Prisoners of War (POW) and the problem of

returning Bengalis from Pakistan and Bihari Muslims from Bangladesh to Pakistan. When Pakistan attempted to integrate 'Azad Kashmir' (POK) with Pakistan (1975), Indira Gandhi neutralized the nefarious attempt by concluding an accord with Sheikh Abdulla on February 1975, thereby reiterated that Kashmir's accession to India as full and final. Pakistan turned hostile towards India.

Janata Government

Morarji Desai tried his best to improve India's relations with Pakistan. Though Desai and Vajpayee vociferously condemned the foreign policy of the Congress era, they, in power, started talking about improving relations with Pakistan. Official level exchanges between India and Pakistan slowly increased as there was marginally expanded cooperation in the fields of commerce, culture, and sports. On 14 April 1978, India and Pakistan signed a bilateral agreement with regard to the Salal Dam. However, Pakistan persisted in articulating the Kashmir issue. It was also increasingly critical of India's treatment of its Muslim minorities. The Pakistan intelligence agencies subverted Sikhs by supporting separatist leaders. By the time Morarji Desai relinquished charge in August 1979, Indo-Pakistan relations were generally back to square one, linked to abiding controversies, which affected them as a continuum.

Rajiv Gandhi

Rajiv Gandhi represented a new generation that had taken over the Country. He considered sustained peace with neighboring countries a prerequisite for nation-building. So, he pursued the path of peace. When he met General Ziaul-Haq during 1985, he strived to secure a better and more mature bilateral understanding, friendship, and cooperation between the two countries. He welcomed Benazir Bhutto's electoral victory in November 1988 and supported her efforts to revive democracy in Pakistan after a gap of 11 years. Rajiv Gandhi snatched the earliest opportunity to have direct contact with Bhutto during the annual SAARC Summit and Islamabad in December 1989. The fourth SAARC Summit held at Islamabad provided the much needed opportunity for both Rajiv and Benazir to deepfreeze the relations between the two countries. As a result of bilateral talks between the heads of India and Pakistan, three amicable agreements had been signed:

- (1) to prohibit attack on each other's nuclear installations;
- (2) to encourage mutual cooperation in the areas of arts, culture, archaeology, education, mass media, sports, and people-to-people contact, and
- (3) to avoid double taxation in respect of bilateral trade.

These three historic agreements heralded the revival of Simla spirit and the principle of 'beneficial bilateralism' between India and Pakistan.

Narasimha Rao

The demolition of Babri Masjid on 6 December, 1992 had vitiated the already deteriorating relations between India and Pakistan. Pakistan intensified its anti-India tirade. This hostile attitude reflected at the meetings between Rao and Nawaz Sharif. Pakistan had been busy in rallying the Islamic countries behind it on the issue of Masjid demolition. Though the two prime ministers had agreed at the Harare Commonwealth Summit, to work for a mature political understanding, Pakistan backed military attacked an Indian outpost in the Kargil sector. Pakistan continued to encourage the separatist elements in Kashmir. Since the return to power of Benazir Bhutto in 1993, communications between the two countries broke down. Pakistan insisted the resolution of the Kashmir problem in the light of U.N. Resolutions of 1948–49. The insurgents attacked the Hazratbal Mosque and it was repulsed "without" firing a single shot. Indo-Pak relations were characterized by political hostility unilateral intransigence and diplomatic deadlock.

United Front Government

Prime Minister I.K. Gujral initiated unilateral action to improve relations with neighbouring countries. The core concept of Gujral Doctrine is that larger neighbour shall give more to neighbours, without reciprocal commitment. Accordingly, Gujral was willing to make unilateral concessions on anything, except the sovereign and secular character of India. When he met Nawaz Sharif in May 1997 at Mali during 9th SAARC Summit, the two leaders were determined to work together to find an amicable solution to all outstanding problems between the two countries, including the Kashmir dispute. They desisted from mentioning Kashmir issue in all their public statements and comments. Prime Minister I.K. Gujral announced a series of measures to ease Indo-Pakistan relations and promote people-to-people contact between India and Pakistan:

- (1) Pakistani businessmen coming to India will be issued oneyear multiple-entry visa;
- (2) Travel was made easier and friendly for Pakistani pilgrims and tourists; and
- (3) Senior Pakistani citizens were exempted from reporting to the police on arrival in India.

Vajpayee

Indo-Pak relations by nature have been antagonistic and adversarial, essentially confrontationist. It was confounded after Pokhran II nuclear tests in May 1998. Vajpayee–Sharif meeting in September in New York on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly session seemed to have broken the ice. Vajpayee’s bus ride to Lahore on 10 February 1999 and Lahore Declaration created euphoria of hope. By the end of 1999, cross-border terrorism took a turn for worse when the Indian Airlines plane was hijacked by terrorists. BJP Government's extremely rigid political positions in relation to Pakistan proved to be counterproductive leading to stalemate. Tit-for-tat responses and mutual mistrust complicated Indo-Pak relations. Prime Minister Vajpayee was constrained by compulsion of circumstances to invite General Pervez Musharraf to India for talks. The talks took place at Agra (July 2001). The Pak General made excellent use of the Agra Summit to publicize his views. The Agra attempt was a fiasco. "July 2001 is likely to go down as the cruelest month as Atal Bihari Vajpayee endured in his foreign policy endeavor". Following terrorist attack on Parliament on 13 December 2001, the BJP-led NDA Government took some tough decisions:

- (1) India withdrew its High Commissioner from Islamabad and asked Pakistan to recall its Deputy High Commissioner in New Delhi;
- (2) India refused flights of Pakistan aircrafts over Indian airspace and cancelled its own flights using the Pakistani air space;
- (3) the Delhi–Lahore bus service and Samjhauta Express train were cancelled; and
- (4) Indian troops were mobilized in strength along the international border as well as the Line of Control. By the summer of 2002, a warlike situation existed between the two nuclear neighbors.

Prime Minister Vajpayee realized that tit-for-tat emotional response and unilateral brave decisions will not improve bilateral relations. He, therefore, once again extended his hand of friendship to Pakistan during his visit to Kashmir in April 2003. India agreed to exchange High Commissioners, reintroduce Delhi–Lahore bus service, resume over flights, encourage people-to-people contacts by liberalizing visa facilities, and initiate confidence building measures. Pakistan responded by creating difficulties in resumption of over-flights and harping on denial of rights to Kashmir is and so on. Cross-border terrorism did not stop either. At best, Vajpayee's peace initiatives created yet another road-block to be removed perhaps by his successor.

3 Indo-Bangladesh Relations

India and Bangladesh have operationalized a new riverine trade route on September 3, where a Bangladeshi vessel transported a cargo of cement to Tripura (India) as part of efforts to boost connectivity between the two countries. This new trade-route will benefit both the nations and will help India strengthen the bonds with the neighbor. India-Bangladesh bilateral relations goes back to a shared history and common heritage, linguistic and cultural ties.

The Background of India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relations

India was the first country to recognize Bangladesh as a separate and independent state and established diplomatic relations with the country immediately after its independence in December 1971. The relationship between the two nations is anchored in history, culture, language, and shared values of secularism, democracy, and countless other commonalities between them. In the last couple of years, the relationship has been further strengthened including through cooperation in new and high-technology areas.

Various Joint exercises of the Army (Exercise Sampriti) and Navy (Exercise Milan) take place between the two countries. India shares the longest land boundary of 4096.7 with Bangladesh.

India-Bangladesh Bilateral Institutional Mechanisms

Sharing of River Waters:

India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers. A bilateral Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) signed in June 1972 to maintain liaison between the two countries to maximize benefits from common river systems is working well for the two nations. The Ganga Waters Treaty signed in 1996 for the sharing of waters of river Ganga during the lean season (January 1-May 31) has enhanced the peaceful neighborly relations between India and Bangladesh. Regular meetings of the Joint Committee on Sharing of Ganga Waters are held to take stock of the implementation of the provisions of the treaty.

Security and Border Management:

India and Bangladesh share 4096.7 km. of the border, which is the longest land boundary that India shares with any of its neighbours. It shares the borders with the Indian states of Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Mizoram. The India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) came into force following the exchange of instruments of ratification in June 2015. As per the agreement, the enclaves of India and Bangladesh in each

other's countries were exchanged and strip maps were signed. Residents of these erstwhile enclaves, who opted to retain their Indian citizenship made a final movement to India by November 30, 2015.

The Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) signed aims to synergize the efforts of both the Border Guarding Forces for checking cross border illegal activities and crimes as well as for maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the India-Bangladesh border.

Bilateral Trade and Investment:

The first Trade Agreement between India and Bangladesh was signed in 1972. The India-Bangladesh Trade Agreement is signed for a period of 5 years with a provision for auto-renewal. There are a number of other trade-related agreements that have been signed between both countries.

India's exports to Bangladesh for the financial year 2018-19 (April-March) stood at the US \$9.21 BN and imports from Bangladesh for the same period stood at the US \$ 1.22 BN. At present, Bangladesh allows transit facilities to India's north-eastern states by waterways for cargoes and roadways for passengers. For transit through waterways, India and Bangladesh had signed the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT).

In addition to LOC funds, the Government of India also provides grant assistance to Bangladesh for projects under 'Aid to Bangladesh'. Projects such as the construction of school/college buildings, laboratories, dispensaries, deep tube wells, community centers, renovation of historical monuments/buildings, etc have been financed by the Government of India under this programme. At present, three Sustainable Development Projects (SDPs) are being undertaken in the cities of Rajshahi, Khulna, and Sylhet. The extended development work of Rabindranath Tagore's ancestral house in Shilaidaha is as well as 36 community clinics in selected districts of Bangladeshis also being undertaken. One of the biggest projects under the Indian grant assistance is the Bangladesh section of the Agartala-Akhaura rail-link.

Power and Energy Sector Cooperation:

Cooperation in the power sector has become one of the hallmarks of India Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh is currently importing about 660 MW of power from India. The 1320 MW coal-fired Maitree thermal power plant, a 50:50 JV between National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) of India and Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), is being developed at Rampal. Many Indian public sector units such as Indian Oil Corporation,

Numaligarh Refinery Limited, Petronet LNG Ltd are working with their Bangladeshi counterparts in the oil and gas sector of Bangladesh.

Connectivity:

India-Bangladesh is a good example of connectivity through all modes of transport. The movement of goods by road is operationalized through 36 functional Land Customs Stations (LCSs) and 2 Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) along the border. This includes the Petrapole-Benapole ICP through which more than 50% of the bilateral trade takes place on account of which it has been decided to operate these land portion 24x7basis since 01 August 2017. The Protocol on Inland Water Trade and Transit (PIWTT) has been operational since 1972. It permits the movement of goods over barges/vessels from India through the river systems of Bangladesh on eight specific routes. There are regular bus services between Kolkata-Dhaka, Shillong-Dhaka, and Agartala-Kolkata via Dhaka. A new bus service (Dhaka-Khulna-Kolkata) was launched during PM Sheikh Hasina's visit in April 2017

Cultural Exchanges:

The Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC), High Commission of India, is a Cultural Centre of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations of India in Bangladesh. Inaugurated in 2010, IGCC regularly organizes programmes covering a wide-gamut of cultural activities. The IGCC also holds regular training courses in Yoga, Hindi, Hindustani Classical Music, Manipuri Dance, Kathak and Painting. The courses are very popular with Bangladeshi students. IGCC Hindi teacher also teaches Hindi at the Institute of Modern Languages in University.

Recent Developments in India-Bangladesh Trade Relations

- The inauguration of a joint project by India and Bangladesh to let India buy liquefied petroleum gas from Bangladesh for consumption in India's north-eastern state of Tripura.
- The inauguration of a skill development center that will provide basic as well as advanced training some 200-300 Bangladeshi youth on an annual basis for employment in the small and medium scale industry sectors.
- Terms for the use of the Chattogram and Mongla ports in Bangladesh for the movement of goods to and from India.
- A pact signed for India to draw 1.82 cusecs (cubic seconds) of water from Bangladesh's Feni river for use by India in Tripura state.

Major Concerns

- The Teesta waters dispute remains a major issue due to continuous protest by the Mamata Banerjee led West Bengal government.
- National Register of Citizens has left out 1.9 million people in Assam who are being labeled as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh is firm in its stance that no migrants traveled to Assam illegally during the 1971 war of independence and NRC may risk the relations.
- The Rohingya issue and India's remarks in 2017 on the issue have been upsetting for Bangladesh which has been facing the challenge of providing shelter to more than a million Rohingya refugees fleeing persecution
- Bangladesh is overwhelmingly dependent on China for military hardware. China's footprint is growing in Bangladesh's economy.

4 Relations with Sri Lanka

The relationship between India and Sri Lanka is more than 2,500 years old. Both countries have a legacy of intellectual, cultural, religious and linguistic interaction. In recent years, the relationship has been marked by close contacts at all levels. Trade and investment have grown and there is cooperation in the fields of infrastructure development, education, culture and defence. In recent years, significant progress in implementation of developmental assistance projects has further cemented the bonds of friendship between the two countries. India's consistent position has been in favour of a negotiated political settlement, which is acceptable to all communities within the framework of a united Sri Lanka and is consistent with democracy, pluralism and respect for human rights.

India's role in Civil war and its implications

- The bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka deteriorated in 1980's with a rising of the Tamil militant separatism in Sri Lanka.
- In 1987 with the objective of improving the ties, Indo-Sri Lankan Accord was signed between India and Sri Lanka.
- It proposed a political solution to the Sri Lanka's conflict by establishing a provincial council system and devolution of power for nine provinces in Sri Lanka. (This is popularly known as The Thirteenth Amendment (13A) to the Constitution of Sri Lanka)

- India also deployed Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka intended to perform a peacekeeping (It is known as Operation Pawan, which ultimately resulted in the assassination of PM Rajiv Gandhi).
- After two years of constant military engagement, the IPKF was withdrawn as it failed to defeat LTTE.
- Finally, in 2009, 25 years of violence ended when Sri Lankan government seized the last area controlled by Tamil Tiger rebels. India at that point of agreed to reconstruct the war-torn areas and started many rehabilitation programs.
- However, the pro-LTTE governments in Tamil Nadu influenced the decisions of Central Government which posed a roadblock in humanitarian assistance in Sri Lanka.
- Also, the relationship started deteriorating when India voted against Sri Lanka in 2009, 2012 and 2013 at the US-sponsored UNHRC resolution to investigate alleged human rights violations by the state against the Tamil rebels.

India-Sri Lanka Relations: Areas of cooperation

Cultural Relations:

- The People of Indian Origin (PIOs) comprise Sindhis, Gujaratis, Memons, Parsis, Malayalis and Telugu speaking persons who have settled down in Sri Lanka and are engaged in various business ventures.
- Though their numbers (10,000 approx.) are much lesser as compared to Indian Origin Tamils (IOTs), they are economically prosperous and are well settled. Each of these communities has their own groups which organize festivals and cultural events.
- The Cultural Cooperation Agreement has been signed between both the countries.
- The Indian Cultural Centre in Colombo actively promotes awareness of Indian culture by offering classes in Indian music, dance, Hindi, and Yoga. Every year, cultural troops from both countries exchange visits.
- Buddhism is a connecting link between India and Sri Lanka on religious lines.
- Education is another important area of cooperation between India and Sri Lanka. India offers scholarship slots annually to deserving Sri Lankan students.
- Tourism also forms an important link between India and Sri Lanka. India is the largest source of market for Sri Lankan tourism.

Trade Relations:

- Sri Lanka is India's second largest trading partner in SAARC.
- India and Sri Lanka signed FTA in 1998, which facilitated increased trade relations between the two countries.
- Sri Lanka has long been a priority destination for direct investment from India. India is among the top four investors in Sri Lanka with cumulative investments of over US\$ 1 billion since 2003.
- Economic and Technological Cooperation Agreement (ETCA): The proposed ETCA between India and Sri Lanka would facilitate trade in services, investments and technological cooperation. With ETCA signed, Indian investments will flow into Sri Lanka to make the island's production facilities part of the Indian and international value chain.

India-Sri Lanka: Issues and Conflicts

Strategic Issues:

- In the period of low profile relationship between the two nations, SL apparently started favoring China over India.
- Over the years Chinese funds started flowing, it has started big buck infrastructure projects in the island nation. The presence of China in Sri Lanka increased significantly in the recent years.
- As part of Maritime Silk Route (MSR) policy, China built two ports, one in Colombo and another in Hambantota.
- China has also collaborated in satellite launching activities with Supreme SAT (Pvt.), Sri Lanka's only satellite operator.

India's efforts to counter China

- In 2014 India abstained from voting on a UNHRC resolution calling for a probe into alleged war crimes by Sri Lanka. And it helped to revamp the century-old relationship with Sri Lanka. (While Pakistan and China voted against the resolution)
- In a sign of a closer strategic partnership between Sri Lanka and India, they signed civil nuclear cooperation agreement which is Sri Lanka's first nuclear partnership with any country.

- In the wake of China's economic dominance in the island, India is also entering into Sri Lanka's mega project business in a big way by focusing on infrastructure development in the Northern and Eastern provinces.
- India is also planning to build Trincomalee Port. The port is envisioned as an Indian counterweight to Chinese developments at Hambantota Port.

Fisherman Problem

Fishing disputes have been a constant area of concern between the two South Asian neighbors for a long time. Sri Lanka has long expressed concerns about illegal fishing by Indian fishermen within its territorial waters across the Palk Strait. The country regularly arrests Indian fishermen for crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) that demarcates Indian and Sri Lankan waters. India also detains Sri Lankan fishermen for the illegal fishing.

Katchatheevu Island

- It is an uninhabited island that India ceded to Sri Lanka in 1974 based on a conditional agreement called "Kachchativu island pact".
- Later on, Sri Lanka declared Katchatheevu, a sacred land given the presence of a Catholic shrine
- The central government recognizes Sri Lanka's sovereignty over the island as per the 1974 accord. But Tamil Nadu claimed that Katchatheevu falls under the Indian territory and Tamil fishermen have traditionally believed that it belongs to them and therefore want to preserve the right to fish there.

India shares a common cultural and security space with the countries in the South Asian region especially Sri Lanka. As a prominent Asian nation with critical national interests in South Asia, India has a special responsibility to ensure peace and stability in its closest neighborhood. India should shed its big brother image and actively take part to rebuild the war-torn country. India needs the support of Sri Lanka to emerge as a Blue water navy in the Indian Ocean and also in pursuing the permanent membership in United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Therefore, the two countries should recognize the legitimacy of each other's concerns and operate in a way which is mutually beneficial.