

India in Arctic Region: Political & Economic Diplomacy

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Abstract

The global bellwether ship of India in G20 has heralded its inborn ideal "vasudhaiva kutumbakam" across the continents in the contemporary world. "Sengol" in the hands of Prime Minister Modi in the new parliament carved a niche for itself by remembering Cholas' reach which went beyond Indo-Pacific region. India also made its precious presence in various regional organisations like QUAD, BRICS and other prestigious and renowned regional organizations. The foreign policy of India is an all embracing and comprehensive one which particularly intends to cooperate with all nations to maintain peace and security (Art.51). India's role in United Nations peace-keeping operations received wide applause from all the nations. That said, Arctic region is a special zone for all the countries, since it comprises of abundant level of hydrocarbons, natural gas, rare elements and other unknown resources. This piece of research is an endeavour to picturise role of India in arctic region through the prism of political & economical diplomacy.

Keywords: *Arctic; Diplomacy; One world; Coexistence*

USA China and Russia are already making their strenuous efforts for explorations and expeditions. Arctic council is functioning as International Government body which is taking care of issues related to environment protection and sustainable development. Further the melting of ice and glaciers paves way for new sea route which may enhance connectivity to Europe and North America. India's connectivity to Arctic can be traced back to 1920s in which it signed in Svalbard treaty, Paris. India's first scientific expedition to arctic is in 2007 for researching in biological science, Oceanographic. Atmospheric science and glaciology. In 2008, Himadri a research base in Svalbard, Arctic is dedicated to India. Further India's concern in Arctic can also be perceived through the Arctic melting which creates havoc for 200 million Indian people who lives in coastal areas. Hindu Kush Himalaya or Third Pole will be the worst affected region which comprises of India, China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. A noble initiative was undertaken to introduce "Arctic model collaboration" in the summit on "Third pole Himalaya and the Arctic model" during 18th and the 19th January 2023, in UAE. India's concern in Arctic cannot be viewed as opportunism, but to be in terms of Survival and Security. More than any other Nations Russia is having collaboration projects with India viz., Sahalin-I, Vakornoft and Taas Yuryakh. China and USA are also placing their own initiative in order to tap resources and connectivity. India's connectivity to Arctic can be found in the book "The Arctic home in the Vedas" (1903) written by Bal Gangadhar Tilak where he provides evidences about the ancestors of Indian civilization lived in that particular region.

Third world war may originate in Arctic region. India averted third world war by forming alliance in the aftermath of second world war through its unique philosophical and strategical and economic policy of Non-alignment by which

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the nations of the third world where elevated to first world .The ideal of multilateralism got fillip by NAM and the outcome is recently witnessed by all world leaders in the G20 summit held during 9-10 September. BRICS, QUAD are all other regional organisations which emphasize for holistic development of all the Nations through the ideal of sustainable development .War crisis in Ukraine and Indo- Canada imbroglio are all the contemporary issues in which strategic autonomy of India was established and sustained in the international arena.

Beyond the crises in Gaza, Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan and others, the world Nations are facing a great threat in the Arctic region where forces of Russia and NATO and other super powers are maintained to a large extent. Russia claims 53 percentage of the Arctic region where China and USA and other Arctic countries their own. The 8 countries in the Arctic Circle have had their own bilateral grouping and military exercises which cause the major skirmishes among super powers and the third world countries. In 2020 joint military exercises were conducted by UK and USA, while corona affected the entire planet. China established ice silk road by aligning with Iceland and further China along with Norway installed a lab for researching rare elements which are abundant in the region. Geological survey conducted by USA reported 70% of hydrocarbons in the Arctic area. The GDP of Norway is increased to a great extent only because of exhaustion of economic resources in the Arctic.

Canada started a 25 years of project work in the region. There are around 4000 NATO forces in Norway which is Pre-planned against the attack from Russia and China. India's Himadri, research base is doing its part in researching the clouds, precipitation, Long range pollutants and background atmospheric parameters. India is a member of Ny Alesund science managers committee, the international Arctic scientific committee, University of Arctic and Antarctica forum for policy sciences. There are more than 25 institutes and universities, currently involved in Arctic research in India. Environmental protection and Sustainable development are the twin motto of India. From 2013 to 2018, India invested \$12m in Arctic research, and as the 3rd-largest energy consumer with a fast-growing economy and vibrant private sector, natural resources in the region represent an area of significant commercial interest. The third pole region comprises of largest volume of ice and snow outside Antarctica and Arctic by which three million people will be precariously victimized by the ice melt in the Arctic region.

The third pole or Hindu Kush Himalaya comprises of India, China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar will be worst affected if things go un-noticed. Mr. M. Sith, Scientific Head of the International centre for polar research at Mahatma Gandhi University, during experts' discussion in July says that "what is happening in Arctic does not stand through, but goes far beyond the region and can approach our borders at any moment, that is why India is now speaking to intensify its efforts in the Arctic region. India's concern is not opportunism but survival and security. In September 2019 prime minister Modi emphasized that "India looks forward to cooperate with Russia in the Arctic, it has been following the development in the region with interest and is also ready to play the significant role in the council" during annual summit of India and Russia. "India's Arctic mission", published in March 17, 2022 concerned specially about climate change, environmental protection, sustainable development by Indian community. This is also on accordance with the principle of "Aatma Nirbar Bharath".

So far India conducted 13 Arctic expeditions with a good amount of support of Russia. Pivot Asia and QUAD initiatives are bolstering India's vital place in Asian politics along with America. The economic diplomacy and strategic autonomy of India's policy proved and carved a niche for itself in almost all global political and financial crisis. Arctic is a new avenue, although India made its presence in 1920 through Svalbard treaty through which the ideal of "Vasudaivakudumbakam" was inculcated and imbibed.

India's belief in Non-Alignment policy proved itself as a unique nation with noble initiatives. India's role in Bangladesh, Korea, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Ukraine and recently in the G20 Summit portrayed it as a nation of inborn ideals with Noble philosophy of good life of humankind. The inborn ideals Cherished by leaders of national movement still have its impact around the nations of the world. Rulers of Chola dynasty extended the reputation and fame to the extreme end of the eastern corridors. India under the then prime minister Nehru served as a tower of Asia in igniting Non alignment movement and panchsheel principles which still have its relevance in the 21st century. Countries including in Latin America were influenced by India's policies and its leaders. In 1933 Ramakrishna Ashram was established in Argentina. Nehru talked for protecting the rights of oppressed people in Brussels in 1927. MN Roy

in 1917 spoke in the forum of Mexican communist party. Indian Diaspora is around 18 million around the world says, UN Dept of economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in 2020.

India through its Non- alignment movement maintains good relations with both of the super powers. A majority of technical know- how and huge military support it receives from Russia. India's search and research in Arctic is highly assisted by Russia's wanton support and good will understanding particularly in the sectors of coal and steel. Russia's support to India in Arctic region moves to the status of "Easternization of Arctic". It is only with the support of Russia India can enter into arctic, at the same time Russia's access of resources in East Africa can only be possible with the help of India. In addition to that India and Russia takes onerous efforts for polar connectivity. Through eastern sea corridor, it takes only 24 days from Vladivostok to Chennai port.

The ice melt and the subsequent sea route may enhance the trade relationship between Russia and India, particularly for the development of Steel manufacturing. Meanwhile India is also maintaining Goodwill relations with USA, largest two democracies in the world. USA is having huge collaboration with Greenland, Norway and Sweden in the Arctic region. USA and Canada are having a research lab in the Arctic region. Indian Diaspora in USA is around 4.4 million among which so many scientist and technocrats contributes a lot in the Arctic region.

China on its own plays a stubborn role along with Iceland for exploring abundant resources and rare elements. India stands as a model for other Nations by its pertinent role at the international level, which always believes in sustainable development. Its role in United Nations please keeping in more than 40 nations was well received and applauded by world leaders. Be it Ukraine or Canada and Gaza the recent past, India sustained its strategic autonomy along with soft power diplomacy which focused the nation as a moral agent striving for holistic development and world peace.

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