



Evolution of India's soft power Dynamics: Insights and Perspectives

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Abstract

The article aims to analyse the increasing importance of soft power in the context of globalization and the growing conflicts over the use of military power for achieving foreign policy objectives. This article specifically focuses on the role of soft power in the foreign policy of India and sources of India's soft power. It also examines the factors that affect India's soft power adversely and how to increase its soft power. In international relations, the role of public diplomacy, among other aspects, is to brand the country and the nation through its culture and art. This article also argues that the increasing acceptability of its culture and values opens up possibilities for India to realize its foreign policy goals. In recent years, India's leaders have increasingly focused on its diaspora, multicultural ethos and its ancient practices like yoga, through official campaigns and foreign visits. The article traces the evolution of India as a soft power since its emergence as an independent country. It explores how this soft power has shaped India's foreign policy and behavior. India's soft power assets are not of recent origin, but there is an increasing activism to use those assets effectively.

Keywords: Diaspora, Diplomacy, Foreign Policy, Globalization, International Relations, Soft Power

I. INTRODUCTION

Soft power is the capacity of a country to achieve desired goals by influencing and persuading others to embrace its goals. The criteria for discharging soft power have changed drastically in past few years. The innovation in information with globalization are altering and bringing the world closer. At the advent of the 21st century, those two powers have increased American power. But with the evolution of time, technology will transfer to other countries and population and America's comparative superiority will come to an end. As soft power comprises of economic dynamism, preference for foreign direct investment, geography and affirmative relations with neighbours can lead to an increase in growth, technological transfer, vertical networks and regional integration.

The term „soft power“ was coined in 1990 in a book „Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power“ by Joseph Nye. According to the author, “soft power is the ability to affect others and obtain preferred outcomes by attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payment”. Soft power is drawn based on shared values. The idea of power is discussed in international relations, but a definite notion of power is the potential to direct the actions of others in an aspired manner. The soft power of a country is primarily based on three aspects: its culture in parts where it is lucrative for others; it's political worth when it proves them at home and foreign land and its foreign policies when they are considered as statutory and owning moral authority. International and domestic sources of soft power should reflect an emphasis on policies and actions that exemplify justice, collective concern, and rules of fair play (Chiroro 2012).

Soft power is dependent on the potential to influence the tendency of others. Soft power can not only be attributed to influence. Because influence is also based on the hard power of remittances or warnings whereas soft power is based on convincing or the ability to persuade people by rationale. It is also the ability to attract and attraction naturally results into acceptance. Soft power is attributed to the increase in globalization, technological revolution and neoliberal theory in international relations. However, it is not only the implementation of non-traditional tools such as cultural and commercial goods but the platform on which the virtues of soft power rests are society, institutions and policies to achieve the objectives of the country. Likewise, all non-military actions do not include use of soft power.

Soft power is as vital as hard power, specifically in international politics. Indeed, soft power enables a change of behaviour in others, without competition or conflict, by using persuasion and attraction. Joseph Nye uses the theory to study the particular case of the United States. He aims to prove that the country is not in decline and that isolationism must be avoided (Gomichon 2013). Indeed, in an internationalized and interdependent world, the United States has to coordinate and it also requires the cooperation of other countries. Because growing number of problems are global, a multiple party approach in international relations is necessary. Therefore, it is soft power that can be useful in such scenario, rather than hard power. Although, issues such as global warming, outer space and cyberspace could be better addressed with soft power, hard power would be inefficient or incompetent. Soft power can, no doubt, play a vital role in producing benevolence.

However, India's use of soft power has been hindered by major limitations such as lack of resources as compared to countries like USA, and the absence of a clear strategy because of internal conflicts. Other than this, soft power on its own may not be capable enough in the absence of perceptible economic and hard power. India's soft power resources will not transform into aspired policy results on its own. Is there any proof that India's soft power has impacted the policy decisions of other countries? Analyzing a country's impact in exerting such influence must be carried out in the domain of its foreign policy objectives. India's soft power is also experienced by the western countries. In spite of widened and successful exertion of soft power, India has, yet, not been able to develop an authentic combination of soft power elements to attain expected foreign policy goals. The space between highly cosmopolitan and assertive foreign policy and a bounded and inflexible domestic political system is the reason behind the disparity between three fundamental bases of soft power; cultural influence, authentic formed by domestic values and policies, demonstrated through foreign policy.

II. SOFT POWER AND INDIA

India being world's largest democracy, considers its successfully-functioning democracy as the biggest asset in terms of soft power which has thrived despite many issues and problems. Unlike many other developing countries, India has initiated the tradition of democracy. It has been proved that a democratic country would possess more soft power than a country with military dictatorship or an authoritarian regime. As we know, that India has never witnessed military dictatorship rule and yet it has countered and solved, to some extent, various problems it faced during the struggle of independence which has been admired and applauded by the world. India has demonstrated that democracy can function successfully even in a poor, illiterate country and is not only the privilege of the developed western countries. India is conducting free and fair elections since its independence. India's commitment towards democracy boosts India's moral power as well as soft power. India's endurance for democracy and freedom are major values that enhance its soft power.

India's soft power assets are exceptional and remarkable and the present government's approach is noticeable. Still, how much India would be able to access resources to achieve its foreign policy goals remains to be seen. The soft power assets of India were integrated inappropriately in foreign policy making till 1990s. India's soft power is also dependent on how it enacts its values and policies internally.

Soft power takes much time to achieve desired outcomes, but it is an effective tool for attaining goals. One of the major components of soft power, which may be applied in all the cases, is non-violence. The actor exerting the soft power can convince the protagonist and the opponents through non-violence. It can be argued that Mahatma Gandhi, the disciple of non-violence, used it during the freedom struggle to gain independence for India. Soft power, in its present use, became widely popular after the end of the Cold War when the United States emerged as uncontested superpower.

Many features of India's foreign policy which authenticate its soft power like broader acceptance of rules regulating international relations, peaceful resolution of disputes, building economic ties that are mutually beneficial,

recognition of the need to confront non-traditional and transnational security issues such as terrorism, international crime and escalation are becoming more integrated with methods recommended by number of international community. In fact, interested major powers in the international community should be more dynamic in strengthening India's foreign policy and practice integrate with global norms. These powers, and specifically the United States, should view such negotiations as a more intense talks and dialogue with important allies and supporters regarding respective methods to be adopted concerning the issues and opportunities of a growing India, especially in context of India's soft power.

India's huge middle class and their purchasing power, its increasing number of skilled workers, it produces highest number of scientists in the world, huge economic potential and hard power capabilities. Thus, India has both the factors required for hard power i.e. military strength and economic power. Soft power developed over time as Nye theoretically evolved the concept and it was accepted to meet the needs of various interests or places. On the other hand, the approach of soft power shows deficiency of interest in sustaining of a country's actions in a foreign country.

India has demonstrated its soft power for number of years, even before the idea was perpetuated by political experts. In the previous decades, the country exercised its soft power in a more systematic manner for the execution of diplomacy. India, at different stages in its history, has applied both, hard power and soft power. India has considerable potential for exercising its „smart power“, possessing abundant soft power as well as hard power sources. The Indian state needs to realize its potential to attain its global objectives and foreign policy goals. Foreign policy is a tool for a country to stimulate its national interests.

III. SOURCES OF INDIA'S SOFT POWER

In contemporary years, soft power has become a vital element in foreign policy for all the countries. There is no authentic definition that can actually define such a wide concept of soft power. India's soft power can be categorized into various types. The first one being India's cultural and spiritual history that has contributed in developing relations with other regions such as East Asia and South East Asia. It would be appropriate to state that while various governments have attempted to implement different aspects of soft power, India is the only country with increasing economic influence on international platform for which soft power as a policy has been successful. The economic achievements of the Indian diaspora, particularly in the developed countries of the West, have enhanced India's soft power. Soft power has been deployed in different ways by successive Indian governments.

Indian culture which includes Indian festivals, food, religions, spirituality, yoga, movies and music has greater impact on international market, especially in Asia, Europe, Africa and West Asia. It is also the world's largest exporting country for the Information Technology (IT) industry, which is considered as India's potential not only in providing the country with an economic enhancement, but also demonstrating it as a soft power across the globe. Indian diaspora has been proved as the biggest source for exercising its soft power. It is a huge and important instrument of aid for the Indian government in using influence, gaining support and implementation its policies with the help of the superiority they have developed over the time at the places they have made choice to live in. The increase in following of Buddhism and Islam from India has supported to its principle of secularism. Increasing significance and more quests for soft power itself impacts the shifting contours of international relations. It has been observed that such means of power have been enhanced with the development of neo-liberalism and constructivism, ideas that have stressed on the transformation of the nature of world politics.

Cultural diplomacy is an important aspect of a country's soft power. The impact of India's soft power on international platform was perceived way before the term was placed in public domain in the 21st century. Indian arts, culture and spiritualism have appealed people from all the countries across the world for centuries. At present, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been generating new trends in the field of Indian diplomacy by merging modern components of soft power. Five key foundations of foreign policy namely dignity, dialogue, shared prosperity, regional and global security and cultural and civilizational association, have been embraced and intertwined with the more wider economic objectives of the country. Modi has aspired to implant political values of India in its broader geopolitical spectrum and has put specific importance on the notion that India can be a global master.

Indian culture is admired by its immediate neighbouring countries in South Asia. India possesses enormous source of soft power due to its culture and civilizational relations with its huge diaspora, trendy films, music, art and historical and cultural ties with various countries across the globe are the sources of its soft power. Indian food with its fine use of spices and herbs cultivated in the Indian subcontinent is also gaining popularity in the West, especially

in the USA where huge number of Indian diaspora resides. In addition, with the advent of globalization and liberalization of the economy, as interdependency among the countries has increased, India should not remain alienated from other countries by emphasizing on its hard power capacities. India's increasing economic growth after the Cold War has helped the country to develop a positive reputation about India internationally. The deficiency of success in sports and absence of sporting culture are also acting as obstacles in the development of India's soft power.

India has substantial soft power resources which are varied in nature. They are sports, music, art, film, literature, and even beauty competitions. In addition, India's anti-colonial history, democratic institutions, independent press and judiciary, vibrant civil society, multi-ethnic polity, secularism, pluralism, skilled English-speaking professionals, food, handicrafts, yoga, reputation of India as a responsible nuclear power. The increase in the growth of the information technology sector at places such as Bangalore, and the existence of large Indian diaspora in different western countries has enhanced India's soft power.

In short, public diplomacy is an important element for effective implementation of soft power. Soft power is the power to influence others to act according to your interests without using force or coercion. While traditional hard power based on the military and economic resources of the country, soft power operates on persuasion, with the purpose of increasing country's influence. Soft power is majorly based on intangible sources of power. Today, many countries employ a combination of soft power and hard power, which is known as smart power. Soft power resources are usually intangible that comprises of ideas, knowledge, values, and culture which may have long-term effects on societies and are difficult to observe. Culture of a country is considered as one of the most important source of soft power.

IV. THE LIMITS AND CONSTRAINTS OF INDIAN'S SOFT POWER

India's soft power now has become more powerful tool for successful formulation of foreign policy. Nonetheless, India remains a minor soft power in the contemporary world. India's soft power is highly successful in Indian-American community. Indian-Americans have also set more potent political values. In his 2009 presidential inaugural address, President Obama recognized the now-broader diversity of the American population in a simple – but, for anyone familiar with the standard patterns of American political rhetoric, stunning – sentence: “We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and non-believers” (Hymans 2009). However, use of soft power by India has been impeded by certain limitations such as shortage of resources, as compared to the countries like USA, and the inefficient clear strategy because of domestic confrontations. Other than this, soft power itself will not work without visible economic and hard power. India lacks in efficiently using its soft power resources at home and through the Indian diaspora. India, for that matter Indians, will have to glean through their history if ever they want to resurrect their image and exalt India's lost glory. In Shashi Tharoor's words, “India must determine where its strengths lie as it seeks to make the twenty-first century its own” (Gupta 2008). In other words, soft power is a power that is based on intangible influences such as culture, values, ideology, traditional knowledge and it's like. Indians will have to enter bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation with other countries to promote India's tourism, culture and communication. India cannot have the privilege to make such mistakes again and requires understanding that its foreign policy can be strengthened only through supplementary utilization of its soft power.

India's soft power is eroded more by policies like capital punishment among advanced nations. India gains from being one of the major contributors to world economy. Foreign policy also produces soft power when they promote broadly shared values such as democracy. Soft power is drawn based on shared values. In short, India creates a necessity to decide on matter and manner of foreign policy which makes a difference to legitimacy and soft power.

From the late 20th century onwards, the political ideology of Hindutva captured attention of some of the people of the Indian-American community. The Indian diaspora prospers on the lines where the atom makes the molecule conscious of their existence. In the disguise of xenophobia and racism in foreign countries, many people became more adamant in following their culture and traditions is part of that reactionary activities.

While enhancing the understanding of the dynamics of diaspora in a scholarly debate and contributing to the evolution and success of a comprehensive diaspora model, the article essentially challenges and counters the traditional theories of diaspora and soft power, which attempts to apply these two concepts simultaneously. The cultural resource that forms the crux for building a diasporic community can act as a soft power only if they combine their cultural traditions and values with those of the host country. Community has become an exceptional obstacle

for the diaspora in exercising their soft power in the host country. The process of community building has to be impalpable to the members of the host community for the successful utilization of any soft power. Culture is an effective soft power asset that every country possesses. And it has been considered, since ages, as an essential instrument for projecting oneself to the world community, also while enhancing friendly ties with the foreign countries (Gupta 2013).

V. POTENTIAL OF SOFT POWER

In addition to soft power, strategies play a significant role in the contemporary international system. Initially, soft power was defined as co-optive behavioural power which means „getting others to want what you want“. Constructivists in international relations recognized the effect of ideas and norms, which is rather like soft power. The theory of soft power is based upon three steps: (1) categorization of different types of soft power in international relations; (2) Distinction between Nye’s conception of soft power and my conception of soft power by distinguishing between soft resources and hard resources; (3) theories of soft power diverted from soft resources (Lee 2009). Constructivist ideas of power in international relations contain many key elements which Nye considers as soft power.

Soft power is based on the power of attraction. In contrast to this, the use of coercion, or hard power, requires the threat of applying military force or exert economic restrictions. Soft power is one of the significant means of appealing, persuading or converging of values that provides with enhanced capacity of the country or international actor to exert additional influences on the affairs of international system either for enhancing their relations with other actors or influencing the decisions and initiatives of the institutions or organizations. It often convenes the cultural diplomacy but also engages with the values, norms, ideologies and even religious customs to acquire appropriate support from national and transnational groups.

Soft power will be measured in terms of individual’s affirmation to its community worldwide. Soft power is prominent only in a complex milieu. Soft power assists in transfer of technology and transformations in political and economic domain which is of utmost importance for the nations. The foreign policy regarding soft power formulations are partly chosen based on geographical diversity. The soft power plays a defending foreign policy in the era of globalization. The propaganda of the nation-state is to entail the soft power as the instrument of foreign policy. The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority) (Nye 2004).

Soft power has the capacity to influence broader international audiences at large, in shaping the perceptions about the legitimacy and influencing environment of the permissive boundaries in which economic and military power is used. Soft power does not exist in isolation and engages with resources of both, economic capacity and hard power at the national level. Soft power has been contained successfully by other countries over the years. Soft power is one arrow in a nation’s security quiver; it is not an all-purpose panacea (Tharoor 2008).

Soft power is power and at times, it is more powerful than hard power. There is another striking characteristic of soft power that requires to be cleared. Soft power is more about influence on other countries but it is not just limited to influence. In international politics, the means of soft power are not limited, but they are fundamentally dependent on the values demonstrated by the prevailing culture in country, in the instances that sets the criteria through its domestic customs and policies and the manner in which it handles its relations with others. Soft power is an attitude, in partial, in the context that state and other non-state actors should be trained in the use of soft power. To understand the complex concept of soft power is not an easy task and its potential is very often underrated. This is also due to the ideological approach of a country towards power.

Therefore, soft power is not specifically related to the economic and military capabilities that a country possesses; it is also dependent on how a country utilizes these powers. The more effectively it can use its hard power, the more successfully it can apply its soft power. Soft power is a self-governing form of power, which has its own rules, features and characteristics and it requires a proper understanding so that it can be employed efficiently and successfully. In these cases, soft power exhibits all its power as source to achieve success in international politics.

VI. IMPORTANCE OF SOFT POWER FOR INDIA

India is regarded as the creator and promoter of culture and communication and interaction in the period of moderate international politics. India is privileged enough to possess with such effective and influential soft power in the form of diaspora. India also has adopted a well-defined and progressive manner of organizing society. India has a unique civilizational identity. India is an eminent and feasible source of overwhelming ideas and values. These values are extensively adopted, represented and practiced by Indian diaspora in different parts of the world. The ideas that shape global society emanating from the work of Indian civil society and non-governmental groups are called soft power, namely, the ability of a country to become an attractive model and imaginative resource for the world (Abraham 2007).

The most enduring soft power strategies have been those based on people to people communication. Sincere efforts are made by the government to build positive image through soft power. However, ineffective soft power strategies are usually an exception. The following cases indicate how soft power can be utilized effectively. Therefore, volunteering is beneficial for both the host and the home countries, as it promotes understanding different cultures which helps in prevention of conflict.

India could consider itself among the countries with strong potential of soft power. Bollywood and its celebrities have been more influencing as India's soft power than the bureaucratic efforts of the government. From classical and popular music to its cuisine, from the rising popularity of its authors and intellectuals, India has started to acquire an edge over others in terms of soft power. Soft power resources would make India a more just and efficient society, a global economic power, a nation whose society is based on the principle of equality and an economy that has larger share of the global wealth, possessed from global trade and investment. Indian diaspora is a huge soft power asset. The recent shift in Indo-US relations is credited to lobbying, influence and reputation of the Indian-American community. Lobbying host states to affect their foreign policy is a political tool that diasporas use to influence homelands indirectly. The desired foreign policy changes sought through lobbying range from increased economic and military support for the homeland to recognition of the homeland as an independent state (Antwi-Boateng 2011).

The Modi Government's foreign policy coherently directs at, among many other aspects, constructing an Asian region based on „*vikasvaad*’ that would install peace and solidarity in the continent. The largest continent in the world, Asia, has not only been experiencing pioneering economic growth and development but is also exposed to the prevalence of major internal conflicts. Cultural relations and alliances can be one of the amending ways to escape from conflict and sustain peace. Indian cultural diplomacy strives to promote the idea of peace, brotherhood, co-existence and prosperity.

The soft power has already become the key element of the comprehensive power of a country. The soft power can both, strengthen the coherence and the willpower of the masses in a nation and the ability to influence international affairs of a country. It can create impact on other countries and people through the policy, rule, opinions and the action. Developing soft power of a nation is beneficial for enhancing the comprehensive power, the international competitive strength and the force of a country. Thus, taking advantage of the soft power will help to realize the stakes of a commonwealth and the weaknesses of international policy. A better understanding of soft power is advantageous for protecting other nations and executes peaceful evolution. There are at least some elements of soft power that are central but without understanding them it is impossible to understand the nature of power (Pallaver 2011).

VII. INDIAN DIASPORA AS A SOFT POWER

Indian diaspora is a vital soft power asset. There are millions of Indian diaspora in number that are spread across even smaller countries such as Fiji, Guyana, Malaysia, Mauritius, South Africa, Surinam, Sri Lanka and Trinidad. While Indians were brought over as indentured labourers to colonials of British Empire in the nineteenth-century, the professionals of this community have found its way to the Australia, Canada, United States and other countries of the West in the twentieth century. The recent shift in Indo-US is credited to lobbying, influence and reputation of the Indian- American community. One of India's most traditional and embraced asset, yoga, is popular across the globe, both, in the form of exercise and as a source of health and happiness by huge number of people. Yoga has already been considered as an important global phenomenon and as important aspect of life which is increasingly being integrated in the mainstream culture, especially in the western countries.

The formation of the Indian diaspora has occurred due to the different phases of migration from the ancient to the colonial period and the present era of globalization. These different phases of Indian migration to different

countries of the world have in fact effected perceptible changes to the homeland. Indian diaspora is one of the largest diasporas of the world situated in almost all the corners of the globe. In various countries of the world, Indian community competes with other ethnic communities for economic and political power. There is a significant presence of the Indian community in the industrially developed countries like, USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand etc. In these countries Indian community works more as a soft power.

The Indian diaspora has transformed economies and has occupied prestigious place in United States. Its members are positioned as entrepreneurs, workers, traders, teachers, researchers, inventors, doctors, attorneys, engineers, managers and decision makers. This clearly reflects the desire to actively engage an already proactive diaspora for obtaining long-term economic gains and enhancing India's image abroad. The economic and political import of the diaspora and the demand for engaging it is the product of India's growing strategic importance and its intentions of integrating it. While Indian diaspora is more politically active in North America, especially the United States, the economic ties are weaker with East Asia.

With the increase in the economic power of India, a new class of people has established who are known as middle class, which is highly progressive and very important for the development of India because people belonging to this class consistently have desire to achieve high and elevate the standard of its living. Therefore, this class has become the majorly contributing people in the growth of the economy of its country and they are very much interested in enhancing or exploring their educational and economic capabilities by migrating to different parts of the world for the betterment of their lives.

Indian diaspora has in fact played a very active role in the development of India. Gradually, the role of Indian diaspora has been accepted as crucial for India. The remittances received by India from its diaspora and the developmental and philanthropic works undertaken by the diaspora have been quite noteworthy for India's growth. Indian economy has been enriched by the investment of the entrepreneurs from Indian diaspora. Politically, Indian diaspora has emerged as a „soft power“ influencing and enriching India's relationship with their host countries. Indian diaspora has also been India's cultural ambassadors carrying India's pluralism and diversity, spiritualism, civilizational ethos etc. to different corners of the world. All these roles of Indian diaspora have been a significant factor in Indian government's policy formulation for them. Certainly, India's policy towards its diaspora has been quite progressive with the recognition of diaspora as a partner in India's growth.

Out of all the countries, the United States has been a major country of attraction and interest for the people of middle class. The diaspora, that is already well established, assist them with the migration process and gain advantage from it by being the counter party. The objective was to harness the cultural assets such as language, film and music and economic capacities such as trade. The soft power is strategically significant for any country. The India's soft power goals in US are also strategic in nature. Diasporas have emerged as powerful entities since they are recognized as „soft power“ in the realm of foreign policy strategy and also as an agent or catalyst of economic development of countries of origin beside their active role in the host countries (Mahalingam 2013).

The Indian diaspora has acquired elite positions in global technology industry and other areas of professionalism as well. Indian diaspora promote Indian food, yoga, traditions and values which are some of the major potential sources of soft power of India. Due to its liberal values, open society and democratic values India's soft power influence is wide. India's soft power now has become more powerful. Nonetheless, India remains a minor soft power in the contemporary world. Soft power ambitions were held by Indian leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru in colonial era. India's soft power is highly successful in terms of Indian diasporic community. Increasing number of Indians in foreign countries has been enhancing factor for economic strength.

Diaspora group works as a soft power in building, influencing and strengthening the relationship between the home and host country like the Jewish, Chinese, Mexican diaspora etc. Indian diaspora has emerged as a powerful group. Indian diaspora has spread in about more than one hundred and thirty countries of the world. So, Indian diaspora acts as the ambassadors of India. One of the significant aspects of the Indian diaspora is that of plurality. Raghuram and Sahoo point out the plurality within the Indian diaspora, a plurality which takes many forms: geographical dispersion, historical contexts, temporal frames, authorial positions, political affiliations. It is thus an assemblage, not a narrative (Raghuram and Sahoo 2008).

Indian diaspora has contributed prominently for the around development of India. They have certainly a say in the foreign policy making of India. Indian diaspora is the true ambassador of India promoting India in different parts of the world. In every achievement of the overseas Indians, India becomes known at the world platform. Truly, Indian

diaspora is the soft power influencing the foreign policy of their host countries in favour of India. The foundation and continuance of India's good foreign relationship with the US to a great extent can be credited to the Indian diaspora in the USA. Therefore, a tangible and scrupulous Diaspora policy is imperative to leverage upon the growing Indian Diaspora population. With the versatile role of Diaspora, India could fulfill its cherished dream of being a super power and it could make much headway in its international and foreign affairs (Mahalingam 2013). Certainly, there is no doubt that the diaspora can be India's rescue. It is surely in the interest of both India and the diaspora group to make up an equally beneficial relationship.

VIII. SOFT POWER IN INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN 21ST CENTURY

Foreign policy is a method adopted by countries to engage with other countries through discussion and negotiation. It helps countries to engage politically, socially, economically and militarily with each other. When foreign policy is studied, it should analyse the interests of specific nations. A number of terms are used to by foreign policy analysts to indicate what countries want and the way decision makers believe they should chase these. The most common of these are interests, goals, beliefs, priorities, tactics and strategies. Foreign policy has often been described as the interplay between various political *agents* (including individuals with specific needs and wants) and *structures* formed by social relationships (such as the state, as well as organisations and rules which are commonly constructed) (Lanteigne 2009).

India's foreign policy has its base in its civilization and culture. Civilizational and cultural values are major factors of the sources of soft power of foreign policy. India's foreign policy, in contemporary times, is encountered with number of challenges. The foremost challenge however, is to develop the most effective way to leverage soft power resources to fulfill strategic interests. India's diverse long-term and short-term national interests demand the alignment of a country's foreign policy in accordance with the realist approach. In countering the new challenges like new-colonialism, nuclear armaments and other issues of human security, India's soft foreign policy approach plays a vital role. But to achieve the status of a global power, India has to take a pragmatic approach; a policy which would be combination of hard and soft approach.

Foreign policies can subscribe to soft power when they are viewed as authorised and having moral legitimacy, and when they increase the ability to influence the agendas in a way that make others unable to express their inclinations because they tend to be too impractical. Recently, soft power has been considered as an important part of foreign policy across the world. India's soft power can be classified into several categories. The economic success of the Indian diaspora, specifically in the developed western world, seeks to raise India's soft power. The word, „India“ induces, for many, the perception of a soft power. India has been a convenient place for religions, languages and cultures. Sanskrit played a significant role in constructing the identity of India as a soft power. Indian tradition connects individual values with universal values and does not distinguish between individuals based on religion, language, race or color. It is well known that one of the most popular ambassadors of India's soft power was Mahatma Gandhi. One of the prominent soft power facilitator of India was Swami Vivekananda.

The nature of the regime in the country also acts as a soft power. The prominent resource for a country's soft power is the foreign policy that is seen as legitimate and acceptable moral authority. Currently financial and political aid by India is also being employed for domestic as well as foreign policy priorities of the regime. Today, the development assistance offered by India to other countries is projecting the real picture of India's soft power. Development aid as a tool of India's foreign policy is likely to make impact when it is part of a larger strategy for individual bilateral relationships.

The foreign policy as soft power operates within the collective consensus. Soft power is the long-term propaganda of community discourse. Soft power defines itself through three employment characteristics. Soft power is liberated in its range of diplomatic possibilities in the situation of ideological flux. Soft power can easily be thinned out by hard power. However, the cost of exercising hard power is more without soft power as a complementary. Rather, soft power rests primarily on three resources: a country's culture, political values, and foreign policy (Allison 2008).

Non-state actors must be brought into account for applying soft power. Non-state actors have equal stake in the soft power foreign policy within the bureaucracy. Soft power becomes globalized to the extent of hegemony. Foreign policy traditionally has a wide range of soft power. Soft power constitutes three major elements i.e. home country, community and foreign policy. Soft power effectively requires a coherent political entity. Soft power

reveals an ideological characteristic that serves the foreign policy. Soft power is likely to combine academic and diplomatic activities in the place of orthodox diplomats. Moreover, the re-emergence of nationalist-inspired attitudes in foreign policy making did not entail *less* diplomatic engagement on the regional level of politics (Plagemann 2015).

Government policies established at home and abroad are additional potential means of soft power. Similarly, foreign policies affect soft power to great an extent. Government policies can strengthen the soft power of country significantly. Foreign policy that behaves in a hypocritical and arrogant manner and is based on a limited approach to national interests can subvert soft power. Therefore, they perceive American people and culture separately from American policies. It shows that people from many nations continue to appreciate the United States for its technology, music, movies and television. But number of majorities in most of the countries confessed that they disapprove the increasing influence of America on other countries of the world. Soft power is presumably also going to become more significant when distribution of power will be observed in another country rather than concentration of power. The attractiveness of these assets and emblems of the American lifestyle is that they permit the U.S. to maximize its soft power and enhance their ability to attract and persuade others to adopt the American agenda (Tharoor 2008).

The soft power in foreign policy is usually extracted from the significant role of national enclave bounded by borders. Soft power works as a compulsive force in a structural power. Therefore, the politics of foreign policy is conducted across the borders. Soft power is majorly demonstrated by the non-state actors of the nations. Soft power should be manifestly used to foster the alliance of mutual interest. Soft power is successful through space and time of evolving national interests. International and domestic socialization is persistent with soft power as an influencer. Accordingly, soft power has emerged as a major tool for nation states to utilize to eventually ensure the enhancement of their intangible standing in world politics, besides strengthening their influence in a benign way (Gupta 2013).

The most significant form of soft power backing for the foreign policy is dependent on the production of transnational networks. Networks can, in the age of immediate establishments and integrated policy-making, be critically vital to national effectiveness. The increasing international significance of soft power, as cross border issues from terrorism to global warming becomes more prominent, has specific consequences for Indian-American relations that explains the concepts in the context of practical applicability. The widening of that association to indulge into discussions of international non-military coordination as an authentic and important form of negotiations, in which India has an equally participative role to contribute more to both, the growth of the association and to global peace and development more broadly. Most importantly, soft power showcases itself in the culture and values with international aspects, and in an open, integrated approach to foreign policy, which considers the coordinating countries global view and values as a means of exit for international dialogues.

Soft power can thus revive the foreign policy of any democratic country in minimum three general ways; by enabling legitimacy for its inventiveness, by helping to enhance a more realistic aspects of its partners in the international system and by enabling transnational networks that help it in publicising its foreign policy goals. There are many ways of fostering and maintaining meaningful transnational foreign policy networks. Creating and assisting globally renowned institutions that are known to be the best. Economic prosperity, technical edge and distinct historical past provide India with unique capabilities of vital global alliance in the domain of soft power, which are only to be fulfilled.

IX. CONCLUSION

Foreign policy has been a well-established concept in the subject of international relations and as such it has evolved and developed significantly. From the perspective of national resources, soft power draws distinction between resources and the consequences. In this way, the role of the instruments of foreign policy such as public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and financial aid can be better comprehended and analysed. Soft power has the capacity to play a vital role in constructing and implementing the foreign policies which helps the country in making effective decisions. Soft power enhances the national capability of a country as it guides in understanding to what extent the countries exercise their soft power capabilities for formulation and implementation of their foreign policies. Soft power as national capability and study how much of their soft power capabilities do countries actually utilize in their foreign policies (Trunkos 2013).

The burden of the aspirations of India to become a developed country and recognized as a super power by 2020, lies on the shoulders of Indian diaspora and therefore it needs to be strong enough to meet the future aspirations of the country. It has been observed that major political shifts and changes in the region of South Asia had reflective effects on the Indian diaspora settled in the United States. Diasporic political activism across the borders is not a new concept. In history, the concept has analysed the major strands of the political activities of the Indian community in America. It has been observed that certain policies like reforms on immigration, citizenship regulations and restrictions on land ownership impacts the capacity and intentions of the diasporic communities to engage in political affairs of the homeland country. There are types of political activism showcased by the Indian American community, those that connect the diaspora with hostland politics and homeland politics, along with those that foster the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

The responsibility of the Indian-American community is to enhance and exert political influence through practicing lobbying, both directly and indirectly. The Indian-American community is widely distributed throughout the country in relation to other communities and some of the geographical areas constitute less than a handful of Indian-American families. Ultimately, with the help of these migration linkages, there will be an attempt to connect the concepts of soft power and interdependence as components of brain gain for the outsourcing country. Indians in the United States have emerged as the single largest as well as fastest growing component of the Indian diaspora worldwide. Their achievements and status make them distinct from other communities in the United States (Sahay 2009).

Keeping in view the theoretical and empirical context, the article is focused on examining how countries utilize their diaspora as cultural resources and soft power, in a system that connects or diverges them to and from, both, homeland and host country or in the ways that connect and indulges diaspora with the host country resulting in new fusions of identity and community.

Since India and United States are the emerging superpowers of the 21st century, they could be entitled with the status of superpowers with perplexing soft powers where their strategic cultures will determine their conduct in international relations, while the rational of the globalization will yield the patterns of soft power the privilege of being influential. However, to strike a balance between the dynamics of hard and soft power, both the countries will be required to apply efforts to build and foster mutually beneficial bilateral relationship by concentrating their cultural resources and leveraging them as soft power. The effects will not only be beneficial for India and United States but it will have global consequences and fulfilling the interests of global communities of creating a more inclusive world in near future.

To conclude, this article predicates that assertive power is the potential of a country to arrange a situation so that inclinations of other countries can be moulded or their interests can be defined in ways that are consistent with its own. Such power seeks to emerge from the resources such as cultural and ideological attraction and laws and institutions of international authority. The United States possess more co-optive power than other countries. American culture is one of the modest and economically beneficial soft power resources. The United States acquires and accumulates more traditional hard power resources than any other country. The changing nature of international politics has also made intangible forms of power more important (Nye 1990).

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