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Lok Sambhashan is a double-blind peer-reviewed quarterly research journal for socio-economic, geo-political strategy(ies), and contemporary discourses. The journal focuses on internal & external security, international socio-economic and cultural relations, defense, military strategy, global peace and prosperity, terrorism, Maoism, cyber security, artificial intelligence, and psychological warfare. Besides, it aims to bring the “Himalaya Hind Mahasagar Rashtra Samuh”, a vast human and cultural territory, into a new economic discourse. It will prove to be a model for global peace and prosperity.

*The main objective of this journal is to disseminate the message of “**वन्दे नितरां भारतवसुधाम्**” with the feeling of national security. Our vision resonates with our slogan “Security-Development-Awareness-Unity.” It aims to develop a strong, secure, and prosperous nation by adopting an Integrated National Security (INS) approach to achieve national objectives by focusing on national security. Thus, our main concept is “**ततो राष्ट्रं बलमोजश्च जातं तदस्मै देवा उपसन्नमंतु**”.*

Some of the objectives of this journal are as follows:

- 1. To develop a comprehensive national defense approach and promote the idea that national security is not only the responsibility of the government but also the responsibility of citizens.*
- 2. To study and analyse contemporary and future socio-national challenges and threats, create public awareness, and contact, communicate, and follow up with the concerned institution and government according to its solution.*
- 3. To make our youth sensitive to various strategic issues of national security and to develop in them the idea of “**मनसा-वाचा-कर्मणा**” (intellect, speech and actions) to encourage them to contribute actively to national development, ultimately becoming strong, active, and responsible citizens with a holistic view on national security.*

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EDITORIAL

भारत की भौगोलिक विविधता और विशालता (सांस्कृतिक और ऐतिहासिक) का वर्णन विष्णु पुराण में इस प्रकार किया गया है,

**“उत्तरं यत् समुद्रस्य हिमाद्रेश्चैव दक्षिणम्,
वर्षं तद् भारतं नाम भारती यत्र संततिः”**

अर्थात् समुद्र के उत्तर और बर्फीले पहाड़ों के दक्षिण में स्थित देश को भारत के रूप में माना जाता है और यहीं राजा भरत के वंशज रहते हैं। वास्तव में, भारत की भाषाई और सांस्कृतिक विविधताएँ लोकप्रिय कहावत -

“कोस कोस पे पानी बदले, चार कोस पे बानी”

(अर्थात् पानी का स्वाद हर एक मील के बाद बदलता है, जबकि बोली हर चार मील के बाद बदलती है) में प्रतिध्वनित होती है। भारत की भौगोलिक विविधता, संस्कृति, परंपरा और दीर्घकालिक विरासत उसे एक अद्वितीय पर्यटन स्थल बनाती है। अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंधों और कूटनीति के संदर्भ में पर्यटन की अवधारणा को फिर से परिभाषित करने की आवश्यकता है। दक्षिण-पूर्व एशियाई क्षेत्रों में सांस्कृतिक पर्यटन और साझा संस्कृति तथा विरासत के विस्तार की काफी संभावनाएं हैं। इन दक्षिण-पूर्व एशियाई देशों में भारतीय संस्कृति की जड़ें बहुत गहरी हैं फलस्वरूप विभिन्न भौगोलिक विभिन्नताओं के उपरांत भी यहाँ के समुदायों के बीच सांस्कृतिक और ऐतिहासिक आदान-प्रदान होता रहा है। वास्तव में, गिरमिटिया जैसे समुदाय, जिन्हें उपनिवेशवादियों द्वारा फिजी, ब्रिटिश गुयाना, नेटाल (दक्षिण अफ्रीका) इत्यादि देशों में ले जाया गया और वहाँ के बागानों में काम करने के लिए मजबूर किया गया। उन्हें वहाँ उस उजाड़ और सांस्कृतिक परिवेश में रहना पड़ा, उन्हें वहाँ स्वतंत्रता और मजबूत सांस्कृतिक पहचान के अभाव को भी सहना पड़ा। धीरे-धीरे इन देशों में उन्होंने अपनी सभ्यता एवं संस्कृति का नींव रखी और आज वहाँ भारतीय सभ्यता एवं

संस्कृति फल-फूल रही है। इन देशों के अतिरिक्त बहुत से ऐसे भी देश हैं जो भारतीय संस्कृति से प्रभावित हैं।

पिछले दशक में, सरकार ने भारत को विश्वगुरु बनाने के लिए अपने नागरिकों में सांस्कृतिक और ऐतिहासिक चेतना जगाने के लिए अथक प्रयास किया है। उत्तराखंड (देवभूमि), लक्षद्वीप और अरुणाचल प्रदेश में सांस्कृतिक और विरासत पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देने के लिए सरकार की तरफ से पहल भारतीय पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देने में निर्णायक भूमिका निभा सकती है, जिससे भारत की सांस्कृतिक विकास के साथ-साथ आर्थिक विकास भी जोर पकड़ेगा। यह बिना किसी संघर्ष या शक्ति के प्रयोग के ही देश के आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ाने के लिए व्यापक अवसर प्रदान कर सकता है। उदाहरण के लिए, सारनाथ, बोध-गया, वैशाली और नालंदा जैसे बौद्ध पर्यटन स्थल दुनिया भर में बौद्ध धर्म के अनुयायियों के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण हैं। विदेश नीति के अंतर्गत आंतरिक संबंधों के दृष्टिकोण से, ये स्थान दक्षिण-पूर्व एशियाई देशों और अन्य बौद्ध बहुल राष्ट्रों अथवा समुदायों के साथ हमारे सांस्कृतिक संबंधों को मजबूत करने के लिए क्षेत्रीय केंद्र (सॉफ्ट पावर सेंटर) के रूप में कार्य कर सकते हैं। कूटनीति अब केवल सरकारी मशीनरी से जुड़ी नहीं है, अपितु वर्तमान परिदृश्य में यह समाज के विभिन्न स्तरों तक पहुंच गई है। पर्यटन ने छोटे गांवों, स्थलों और दूरदराज के क्षेत्रों को राष्ट्रीय विकास में सक्रिय भागीदार बनाकर सामाजिक और आर्थिक रूप से सशक्त बनाया है। पिछले कुछ वर्षों में, पर्यटन के क्षेत्र में व्यापक बदलाव आया है और कुछ देशों की अर्थव्यवस्था पूरी तरह से इस क्षेत्र पर निर्भर करती है।

भारत सांस्कृतिक धरोहर का भंडार है। अन्य देशों के इतिहास का ज्ञान (दक्षिण-पूर्व एशियाई देशों के साथ व्यापक सांस्कृतिक-संबंध) बेहतर अंतरराष्ट्रीय संबंधों के लिए पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देने में निर्णायक भूमिका निभा सकता है। इसके लिए विभिन्न चुनौतियों का समाधान कर एक मजबूत सांस्कृतिक पहचान के साथ दीर्घकालिक पर्यटन विकसित करना है। समय

की मांग है कि पर्यटन के कूटनीतिक पहलू को समझा जाए और दक्षिण-पूर्व एशियाई देशों के साथ मजबूत संबंध बनाई जाए । साझा सांस्कृतिक स्मृतियों को फिर से जगाने से सांस्कृतिक संपत्तियों का विकास होगा, जिसमें इन देशों के लाखों लोगों के जीवन को बदलने की क्षमता है । आज शिक्षाविदों, विद्वानों, सामाजिक विचारकों और अन्य हितधारकों को इस पर संवाद शुरू करने की आवश्यकता है, जो नयी बदलती हुई बहुध्रुवीय वैश्विक-संरचना में भू-राजनीतिक संबंधों को और भी सशक्त बनाने की एक पहल होगी । आवश्यकता है एक शैक्षणिक चर्चा एवं प्रशिक्षण रूप में पर्यटन कूटनीति को बढ़ावा देने की ताकि अंतर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर लोक-संबंधों को सांस्कृतिक व ऐतिहासिक पृष्ठभूमि में सतत व्यापक गहराई दी जा सके ।



BHARAT'S TOURISM DIPLOMACY: BRIDGING CONNECTIONS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA

*Dr. Ritesh Kumar Rai**

Abstract

This article examines Bharat's tourism diplomacy towards the region of Southeast Asia. Bharat has historically relied on its non-aligned foreign policy, dynamic democracy, and rich culture as the cornerstones of its soft power. India views Southeast Asia in particular as a crucial location from where it receives its soft power derived from a common culture that has been developed over more than two thousand years. This paper investigates the ways in which these cultures prepared the ground for India's growing influence in the region of Southeast Asia through tourism diplomacy. Bharat's tourism diplomacy emerges as a critical tool for increasing Bharat's influence in Southeast Asia. Additionally, tourism boosts confidence in Bharat and ASEAN's connection, and the two countries are taking steps to expand the tourism industry. This paper also highlights the importance of connectivity projects and infrastructural development. The foundation for a nation's tourism industry's sustainable growth is its infrastructure, that is why Bharat is constantly working to improve this area. Bharat is organizing events and marketing campaigns to ensure that an increasing number of tourists are drawn from the Southeast Asian region. This paper examines Southeast Asia's cultural exchanges with India as well as India's soft power. Although India has impacted ASEAN nations for the past two millennia, the government is currently taking steps to improve ties between the two regions. There are numerous barriers in the way of this relationship's growth and India's increased influence among the ASEAN nations. This also examines the obstacles that India must overcome in order to become more influential among the ASEAN nations. It thoroughly examines potential solutions to these problems.

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Keywords: *Bharat, Infrastructural Development, Soft Power, Southeast Asia, Tourism Diplomacy*

Introduction

In a general sense diplomacy refers to the peaceful management of statecraft through negotiation and persuasive methods. Diplomacy is regarded as one of the fundamental mechanisms that define the international system and the system of sovereign states through negotiations and persuasive methods. It is also referred to as the "Westphalian" system in honour of the *Peace of Westphalia*, signed in 1648 (Lee & Hocking, 2011). The first place, where, such negotiations took place was the Fertile Crescent, where envoys from the Egyptian court and other Near Eastern kings corresponded with one another. The modern diplomacy started with the Peace of Westphalia, which was signed in 1648 CE, put an end to the Thirty Years' War and ensured the independence of every state. Since then, the definition of diplomacy has expanded to encompass more casual exchanges among a wider range of foreign personalities and formal discussions between embassies, consulates, and career diplomats. In actuality, cultural activities and tourism are included in the broad definitions of diplomacy used today (Baranowski et al., 2019).

Tourism is an important sector that can develop many sectors of the economy of a country from agriculture to livestock and from construction to infrastructure. It is not limited to the economic sector only. It can also influence the harmonious relations between people, the cultural life of a country, the international reputation and prestige of a country, and the functioning of its foreign policy at the same time. Because tourism affects the economies of the nations, it is now considered a topic of discussion amongst high-level foreign affairs committees. The tourism sector is continuously rising because of factors like globalization, and countries also working to improve this sector (Jalalpour & Shojaeifar, 2017). Tourism diplomacy is used for the promotion of tourism sectors and to solve a specific problem which is related to a destination crisis between two or more nations or among nations using tourism's soft power. Its

nonviolent argument and flexible methodology enhance the philosophy of international relations and diplomacy as well as the significance and functions of tourism (Muhia, 2023).

Bharat's (India's) cultural and artistic resources have long been praised and arranged as the source of tourists' curiosity. Nowadays, the bureaucracy and the government portray tourism as "an engine of growth" and as a great way to create jobs and earn foreign currency. The many forms of tourism that are popular in Bharat, such as medical, eco, wildlife, heritage, pilgrimage, marine, river, and educational travel, have shown to be effective in putting the country on the map of world travel destinations. Through various tourism initiatives like *Incredible Bharat 2.0*, *UDAAN Regional Connectivity Scheme* (which helped increase tourism to remote regions), *Hop in Hop Out buses*, which are popular in Delhi, Nagar Darshan schemes in various Indian cities, and involving NGOs and private investments in promoting regional tourism, the image of Bharat as a haven for leisure and traditional knowledge systems have been integrated (Babu, 2020).

Bharat has had excellent links with the nations of Southeast Asia since ancient times, and their long-standing relationship has been based on maritime trade. These interactions between the peoples of Bharat and Southeast Asian countries resulted in substantial cultural exchanges and finally resulted in a blending of Bharat's culture with the local culture of Southeast Asia. For thousands of years, people, ideas, and things have been moving from Bharat to Southeast Asia. The great degree of movement in seaborne trade and the eventual settlement by the Indian diaspora made this blending of cultures conceivable (Singh, 2023). This development paved the way for the development of the Tourism sector between Bharat and Southeast Asia.

Bharat's tourism diplomacy towards Southeast Asia is an important aspect of its broader foreign policy. When it comes to civilizations, heritages, structures, languages, and scenic landscapes, Bharat and Southeast Asia have a lot to offer tourists. Bharat tries to attract tourists from Southeast Asia and also makes her policy more convenient for the easy access of tourists from the countries of this region. Since ASEAN and Bharat celebrated their 30th anniversary of partnership in 2022, exploring the possibility of collaborating on tourism will

be quite advantageous. In 2012, the ASEAN and Bharat signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance their tourist cooperation and a protocol to alter the MoU was signed in 2013. In the tourism sector, the protocol and the MoU have been designed to promote proactive collaboration (Kundu, 2021).

This paper analyses Bharat's tourism diplomacy as a means of expanding its influence among the nations of Southeast Asia. Tourism plays a significant role in increasing country's influence at a root level. This paper emphasizes how crucial the tourist industry is to the development of any nation's economy and other sectors. The historical and cultural underpinnings of Southeast Asian (ASEAN) nations and Bharat are covered in the first section of the paper. The current relationships between these two were made possible by their shared historical background. Due to the similarities between the two cultures, culture is the most significant aspect of their relationship how these two countries' shared culture strengthens their diplomatic ties. Since ASEAN and Bharat are key partners, this analysis will focus on the initiatives that these two countries have taken to strengthen the tourism industry. Next, this paper examines how crucial infrastructure is to the boot tourism industry, as well as the connections that connect it. Promotional campaigns and events also help to boost the tourism sector between these two. This paper analyses the events and promotional campaigns between Bharat and ASEAN. Tourism plays a significant role in increasing the soft power of a country. So, with the help of tourism, Bharat is trying to increase its influence in ASEAN.

Cultural Foundations of India-Southeast Asia Relations

Historical links and cultural exchanges between Bharat and Southeast Asia are deeply rooted since ancient times. Southeast Asia is the land of wealth; it attracts Bhartiya to its holy place. The geographical proximity also helps Bhartiya to spread its religion, art, culture, and language in this region. This region is described as a land of gold (*suvarnavipa*), island of gold (*suvarnabhumi*), island of coconuts (*narikeladvipa*), island of camphor (*karpuradvipa*) and island of barley (*yavadvipa*) in the Ramayana, Pali Nidesa and other classical texts (Mishra, 2021). So, the connections between Southeast Asian countries and Bharat are not new. It has been there since

ancient times. This relationship paves the way for the development of the tourism sector, and it is beneficial for both of them.

Bharat and Southeast Asia have a special bond that has been created and altered by many historical events. Faithful followers of Hinduism and Buddhism travelled to southeast Asia by sea and land via South Asia, resulting in the blending of the regional faiths with distinctive Indigenous characteristics. For instance, although Indonesia has the world's biggest Muslim population, the official emblem of the nation is the mythical bird known as the Garuda from Hindu and Buddhist mythology. Apart from being the primary airline of Indonesia, Garuda is also reflected in the wayang, the traditional puppet culture of Java, and an imposing, elaborate statue located in the Prambanan Temple. Thailand, a nation with a large Buddhist population, is another place where the Garuda is widely seen. There, it is more mythologically depicted with a human torso and red feathers. These kinds of cultural exchanges and representations take place at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport, the capital of Thailand. Here, foreign visitors are welcomed by a magnificent mythical display depicting the Samudra Manthan, or the churning of the ocean, which draws heavily from Hindu mythology (Bhattacharya, 2020).

These cross-cultural interactions began when the merchant class, Buddhist monks, and Hindu priests brought Bhartiya philosophy and culture to every part of Southeast Asia. Because they were apolitical and lived in ashrams and hermitages, the villagers welcomed them. Bharat's civilization, culture and religion, therefore expanded across Southeast Asia as a result of the numerous trips that merchants, monks, and Hindu Brahmin priests made to distant kingdoms like Cambodia and Indonesia. The deeper local culture's absorption of Bhartiya political ideology, literature, religion, artistic motifs, mythology, and style occurred with increased contact with Bhartiya who established in South East Asia's kingdoms. Buddhism arrived in Southeast Asia from Bharat during the 3rd century BCE, when King Ashok send Buddhist monks to this place (Sengupta, 2017).

Partnership and Engagement between Bharat and ASEAN

Tourism is a vital aspect of the healthy relationship between Bharat and the Southeast Asian countries (ASEAN). Both Bharat and ASEAN understand the benefit of the tourism industry for the growth of the national economy. Tourism also enhances a country's influence in other regions through people-to-people connections. With the passage of time, they developed a comprehensive network of tourism cooperation and signed numerous agreements for the increase of the tourism sector in both areas.

Encourage ongoing talks between Bharat and ASEAN to develop tourism cooperation further. Examples of these talks include joint marketing and promotion, conferences, workshops and meetings; sharing of resources and best practices in the tourism industry, such as human resource development; practicing sustainable and responsible tourism; exchanging information about tourism; handling crises; investing in tourism and jointly promoting tourism in niche markets and promoting tourism standards. To increase opportunities for cooperative promotion of integrated tourism markets and cooperative investment, encourage the private sectors of ASEAN and Bharat to participate more in the annual ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF), ASEAN Travex, and Professional International Travel Marts held in the ASEAN Member States and Bharat (Plan of Action, n.d.).

As a "Sectoral Dialogue Partner" (conversation at the secretarial level) in 1992 Bharat first formally engaged with ASEAN. In 1995, it became a "Dialogue Partner." The first years of being a Dialogue Partner (DP) involved communication at the level of Foreign Ministers, and in 2002, the first summit-level meeting took place. During the 20th Commemorative Summit Meeting at New Delhi in December 2012, our Dialogue Partnership was elevated to a Strategic Partnership (Bried on ASEAN, n.d.). At the 24th ASEAN-Bharat Joint Cooperation Committee (AIJCC) Meeting, which took place today at ASEAN Headquarters, ASEAN and Bharat reiterated their commitment to fostering their long-standing cooperation (ASEAN, India, 2024).

In 2012, ASEAN and Bharat signed a MoU to enhance their tourist cooperation (Brief on ASEAN-India, n.d.). A protocol to alter the MoU was signed in 2013. The protocol and the MoU have as their goals the promotion of proactive collaboration in the tourism industry. There were over 4.67 million Indian tourists visiting ASEAN nations in 2018. However, in comparison to the total number of international tourists that Bharat receives, the number of tourists from ASEAN is negligible. Issues that ASEAN visitors visiting Bharat have encountered and reported include inadequate infrastructure and connection, as well as insufficient expertise and information regarding major tourist spots in Bharat (Kundu, 2021).

Some of the obstacles have already been addressed with a few initiatives. In 2019, the Philippines joined the list of nations with which Bharat could sign a bilateral MoU on tourism. As a component of the ASEAN Tourism Forum, the 7th ASEAN-Bharat Tourism Ministers Meeting was held in Ha Long City on January 18, 2019. During this meeting, 2019 was proclaimed as the ASEAN-Bharat Tourism Year. The 8th ASEAN-Bharat Tourism Ministers Meeting took place virtually in February 2021. The goal of this elaboration on Bharat's SAATHI (System for Assessment, Awareness, and Training for Hospitality) and Buddhist Circuit is to entice more tourists from the ASEAN region to visit Bharat (Kundu, 2021).

Enhancing Connectivity and Infrastructure Development

Connectivity links economies, fosters trade, and draws people closer together. Bharat envisions a world, where nations freely exchange goods, resources, and ideas. Globalization and openness have the potential to benefit everyone, but in order to do so, the right kind of policies must be created. Strengthening connectivity is vital to the region's growth, wealth, and most significantly the fight against poverty. Competitiveness in the industrial and service sectors depends on an effective and efficient infrastructure. Reliability is increased and expenditures are decreased with improved connectivity. This has a significant impact on industrial transportation and, by extension, production, cost-effectiveness, and supply reliability (De, 2011). This connectivity and

infrastructural projects directly impact the tourism sector. So, Bharat works in this area with ASEAN to improve the connectivity between them.

When the idea of creating physical connectivity with Southeast Asia gained traction at the beginning of the new millennium, Bharat launched the second phase of the Look East policy, which has much broader agenda that includes trade relations expansion, security cooperation, infrastructure development for regional transportation, connectivity, and unlocking Northeast India, which has not only enormous economic potential but also a strategic location in relation to Southeast Asia. Look East Policy is a multifaceted initiative that enables Bharat to work on many dimensions. Events such as the India-ASEAN car rallies from Guwahati to Indonesia (2004) and from Indonesia to Guwahati (2012), the India-Myanmar-Thailand Highway project from Moreh in India to Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar, and the upgrading and construction of the missing links between Jiribam (Bharat) and Mandalay (Myanmar) towards the establishment of a rail link between Delhi and Hanoi via Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia could foster trade and tourism between Bharat and ASEAN (Pukhrem, 2019).

The Eleventh Meeting of ASEAN and India Tourism Ministers was held on 25 January 2024. The aim of the meeting was to discuss how important it is to improve land, air and sea connections between ASEAN and Bharat in order to facilitate smooth cross-border travel, improve visitor mobility, and improve their overall experience. The recent addition of direct flights between Indonesia and Bharat, bringing the total number of direct flights between the ASEAN Member States and Bharat to six, was welcomed at the meeting. The meeting observed that Bharat and ASEAN are starting to prioritize cruise tourism. The meeting also heard that Bharat just unveiled its Draft National Strategy for Cruise Tourism in light of the considerable unrealized potential of overnight coastal tourism (Eleventh Meeting, 2024).

Under the Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD programs, Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled 52 tourist projects valued at about Rs 1400 crore. The projects' goals are to promote pilgrimages and historical places all throughout India, as well as to provide infrastructure for tourism. All 52 locations

experienced the launch events at the same time. The PM also started initiatives like Dekho Apna Desh People's Choice 2024 and Chalo India Global Diaspora Campaign to encourage travel and involve the public in choosing their favourite tourist destinations (Chaturvedi, 2024).

Promotional Campaigns and Events

The Union Ministry of Tourism administers the nation's foreign marketing of travel destinations through events like road shows and festivals, and it has eight offices across the globe. The office in Singapore is tasked with advertising and advocating for the tourism spots in Bharat to ASEAN nations, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, and other Pacific Island states. There are road shows all across the ASEAN region that usually consist of presentations and business interactions. Bharat's Tourism offices have limited jurisdiction, as there is only one office to serve a region that is so vast and culturally diverse. So, it is important to expand the number of tourism offices and implement a promotion strategy tailored to each country. For instance, in 2017, the Sikkim State Tourist Administration chose to showcase its 59 attractions in Thailand through the organization of roadshows (Bhonsale, 2019).

Bharat and ASEAN have a MoU with four goals: (a) to facilitate tourist visits, (b) to strengthen partnerships, (c) to provide mutual support for the development of human resources in the sector of tourism and (d) to explore opportunities for cooperation and sharing information. Apart from sharing data on tourism, figures, best practices and hopes for the future, Bharat and the ASEAN bloc convene two joint working group meetings annually (Bhonsale, 2019).

The member countries of ASEAN have been actively engaged in the process of developing Buddhist circuits both domestically and regionally, involving discussions with Bharat. The concept of promoting ASEAN and Bharat as an integrated circuit was approved during the 2008 ASEAN Tourism Ministers Meeting and is thought to have a lot of promise. In addition, Myanmar has much potential in this field and has properly taken the initiative to unite its neighbours. The Thailand Tourism Authority (TAT) has taken steps to

collaborate with Myanmar on the development of tourism infrastructure (Sailo, 2013).

Soft Power and Cultural Exchange

It is widely acknowledged that Bharat has made a substantial contribution to the world through the use of its soft power, which it derives from its long history of culture and civilization. One of the earliest proponents of global citizenship as it is currently understood is "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," which holds that all people have a communal responsibility to one another and to their shared future. Bharat's soft power today is a powerful reminder that the secularism, tolerance and inclusivity of cultures that are fundamental to our civilization are still relevant in today's unpredictable global environment. This is exemplified by Bharat's vibrant cultural and civilizational heritage as well as by the country's large diaspora (Mukherjee, 2019).

Therefore, cultural diplomacy is an essential component of a country's soft power strategy. Before the phrase became widely used in the 21st century, Bharat's soft power was acknowledged globally. For ages, Bhartiya spiritualism, arts, and culture have drawn visitors from all over the world. Bhart's PM Modi combined fresh aspects of soft power with Indian diplomacy. Strategically speaking, these five pillars of soft power are *Suruksha* (regional and global security), *Samman* (dignity), *Samvaad* (dialogue), *Suruksha* (regional and global security), *Sanskriti* (culture) and *Sabhayata* (civilizational linkages) (Mukherjee, 2019).

Bharat's soft power and cultural exchanges with Southeast Asia are deeply ingrained in historical ties, shared cultural history, and a common desire to promote steadiness and abundance in the region. Bharat and Southeast Asian nations have a close historical, cultural, and spiritual bond; the Bhartiya epics Mahabharata and Ramayana continue to have a lasting impact on people's thoughts. The Ramayana is present in the local society and culture in a variety of ways. The deep cultural linkages to Bharat remain in everything from myths and folklore to traditional art forms and city names to modern lifestyles. These Southeast Asian nations continue to practice various kinds of Rama and

Ramayana in modern times despite changes in storylines, forms, and dramatization brought about by transfer. This indicates the countries' close ties to Bhartiya culture, religion, and society (Raj, 2022).

Bharat adopted several proactive measures to strengthen its position in Southeast Asia. The *India-ASEAN Students Exchange Programme* was envisioned in 2007 by the Indian government, led by PM Dr. Manmohan Singh, with the goal of fostering deeper mutual understanding between the two vibrant regions. Two major events were planned in 2012: the *ASEAN-India Car Rally* and the *Shipping Expedition of INS Sudarshini* to ASEAN nations. The ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit includes these two events. These two occasions brought to light the close cultural, intellectual, and commercial ties that exist between Bharat and ASEAN. The primary objective of the Car Rally is to showcase "India's proximity to the ASEAN." In addition, it aims to raise public awareness of the India-ASEAN alliance and to promote tourism and people-to-people contacts (Bhattacharya, 2013).

Challenges

Bharat-ASEAN relations have developed throughout time. But the full potential has not yet been reached. Recognizing the obstacles and implementing solutions, as well as broadening and strengthening the current areas of collaboration, are essential for both party's mutual interest. Bharat's tourism diplomacy towards ASEAN countries faces some challenges which is lowering its effectiveness. One key obstacle is infrastructure. Accessibility to tourism destinations is still a significant issue, necessitating infrastructure investment from the federal and state governments. The private sector must make investments in the local hospitality industry (Bhonsale, 2019). There are direct flights from Bharat to only six ASEAN countries. These are Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand. However, connections to other important ASEAN nations such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Cambodia have no direct flights from Bharat. So, the flow from these countries is reduced ("Need to Focus," 2021).

Although Bharat has introduced an E-Visa facility for various ASEAN countries, the process is still much more cumbersome than the visa-on-arrival or visa-free (India grants visa, 2024); Travelling to India, n.d.). Visa-on-arrival or visa-free policies are offered by many ASEAN nations and this policy makes them much more attractive to tourists (ASEAN Framework Agreement, 2006). Bharat also has a problem with using cultural connections in its marketing. For example, in spite of long scholarships and cultural exchanges with countries like Indonesia and Thailand, Bharat has not taken full advantage of these co-religionists in developing its tourism.

Bharat has to compete with regional tourism rivals, which have been well-established for years in places like Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. These countries have much better infrastructure, higher levels of marketing expenditure per destination, and are far easier to visit than Bharat is at present. Moreover, fears over security – often stirred up by the media with reports on small incidents in areas such as Jammu and Kashmir – all serve to darken visitor perception of Bharat as somewhere safe to travel. Geopolitics can also impact Bharat's tourism diplomacy, especially in countries whose China ties are close.

To counter these challenges, Bharat needs to enhance air connectivity and improve infrastructure. Direct flights, as well as quick access from many places of Bharat. Bharat can streamline the visa process for travellers from ASEAN countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, etc. Targeted marketing campaigns to highlight cultural ties and promote niche tourism, such as spiritual and eco-tourism. Security matters such as better safety precautions and more cooperation with the press need to be addressed. Engaging in regional tourism activities with other countries and formulating inexpensive tour plans can draw more visitors from ASEAN.

Conclusion

The border between Bharat and the Southeast Asian countries is no longer a barrier for deeper understanding of one another thanks to tourism. Essentially, tourism has revived the notion of world community? It has also been demonstrated that the Indian philosophy of "*athithidevo bhava*," which emphasizes treating guests as God, stimulates foreign curiosity about visiting Bharat. This is one of the main reasons Bharat is still a popular tourist destination.

Travelers engage in cross-cultural exchanges that help them gain a deeper understanding of the nation they have visited. The National Tourism Policy of India recognizes tourism as a unifying force that unites people both domestically and internationally and fosters better understanding via travel, realizing the potential of tourism to sustain peace and better integrate nations. Thus, Bharat attempts to expand its influence in Southeast Asia through tourism diplomacy.

The development of eco-tourism provides a key opportunity. Since different natural landscape thrives, this will be attractive to the eco-conscious and environmentally friendly tourists of neighbouring ASEAN countries. When ASEAN countries enjoy economic growth and rising disposable incomes, Bharat should align its marketing with them in order to develop a larger surrounding area. Additionally, Bharat's growing wellness and spiritual tourism sector, centered around yoga and Ayurveda, offers a unique appeal to ASEAN tourists seeking health and spiritual retreats.

Bharat's main attraction for tourists is its rich heritage and culture. Bharat continuously works to improve infrastructure in its area to attract more tourists. In 2024, PM Modi launched various projects under Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD programs to meet the requirements. Bharat for the promotion of tourism in the ASEAN countries organises some road shows and festivals. However, these initiatives are only the start, as Bharat is unwavering in its quest to broaden and enhance these exhibits and occasions in order to fully

realize the potential of this tourism industry. Despite its inherent limitations, Bharat tries to get better in every area to draw tourists from Southeast Asia.

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BUDDHIST CIRCUITS IN NORTHEAST INDIA: A PILLAR OF TOURISM DIPLOMACY

*Dr. Sarvsureshth Dhammi**

Abstract

Tourism diplomacy is significant for exploring opportunities in countries' natural, cultural, and spiritual heritage. Many countries adopted the concept of tourism diplomacy to enhance their influence and diplomatic ties in the new world order. Countries like China and Thailand in Asia have encashed Buddhism to project countries' soft power and effective diplomacy. This article focuses on how Buddhist circuits with a rich heritage in northeast India can help elevate India's tourism diplomacy with Buddhist majoritarian countries and establish India as a soft power globally. The article examines how promoting the Buddhist circuits enhances regional development, strengthens cultural ties with neighbouring countries, and contributes to regional growth and stability. By analysing the region's natural assets and unique culture, this article will help highlight the challenges and opportunities in positioning the northeast region of India as a hub for Buddhist tourism. This article also provides some policy frameworks for New Delhi's strategic objective for the region's development, cooperation with Southeast and East Asian countries, and coordination with international organisations to develop this region. Ultimately, this paper argues that well-planned Buddhist tourism diplomacy in India's northeast region will recognise countries' diplomatic relations and cultural influence and foster sustainable development in the region.

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Key Words: *India, Buddhism, Northeast region, Soft Power, Tourism Diplomacy*

Introduction

Tourism has a diplomatic advantage for any country. Since the 19th century, the West has developed a tourism policy to support its diplomatic engagements and spread its heritage legacy and economy. However, the same trend has not been seen in Asian countries. The role of tourism was limited to generating economic growth and employment for Asian countries. Later, in the end of 20th century, many Asian countries realised the importance of tourism in track-2/back-channel diplomacy. It helps Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Singapore to weave its cultural diversity to support its foreign policy. These countries successfully developed an eco-system supporting their religious beliefs (Buddhism) to develop local economy and tourism. Due to their cultural and spiritual beliefs, these countries are also able to establish a common agenda to spread their heritage legacy parallel to other tourism activities.

The rise of cultural tourism provides endless opportunities and helps different people know how others live. From attending the festival to visiting historical and religious places. Whether tourist are not a part of diplomacy, they have become part of tourism diplomacy. One of the examples in Asian countries is China, which developed a synthetic cultural legacy in terms of Buddhism. There was a time when China crushed Tibetan culture to promote a singular Han culture over the occupied Tibet. But later, when globalisation witnessed a drastic change and understood the importance of multipolarity in cultural tourism, Beijing changed its stance and started practising multipolar culturalism by forcing Tibetans to marry the Han and settling in occupied Tibet, Xinjiang and the Inner Mongolia region. It gave an edge to China in the diplomatic sphere by spreading its agenda and answering every question efficiently when it comes to human rights violations against different communities. From artificial lakes, villages, and community markets to heritage centres run by other communities' surveillance by strict government

officials can be seen in Beijing when one visits China. This example shows how one nation can use tourism diplomacy to spread its foreign policy agendas. Through developing the synthetic culture of Buddhism, Chinese authorities successfully managed cultural closeness with Southeast Asian countries.

But, when it comes to India, which has a unique, diverse Buddhist legacy, it is lagging in exploring its full potential. Tourism diplomacy is backed by intentionally using countries' tourism potential as a diplomatic tool to strengthen and build international relations (Kuri et al., 2020). To understand tourism diplomacy for India, there is a need to understand the significance of tourism for India's foreign policy. How do other nations use tourism in their diplomacy? What is Buddhism for India and its northeastern states?

In the 21st century, tourism diplomacy is growing its importance in India. It can play a significant role in international relations, backed by its diverse cultural heritage, particularly with regard to Buddhism. It holds a substantial potential to encash tourism as a diplomatic tool. With their unique cultural identities, India's northeastern states can play a critical role in contributing to its tourism strategy. India's four northeastern states, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram share a boundary with Myanmar, which is a door to the Buddhist majoritarian Southeast Asian nations. A recent study focused on how tourism can strategically influence India's foreign relations. The study highlighted how Indonesia attracted tourists from India by showing cultural similarities and targeted tourism promotion. This helped Indonesia to strengthen its bilateral ties with India (Minardi et al., 2020). In addition, the Public Diplomacy Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, established in 2006, recognise tourism as a key element in enhancing the country's global image and influence. This division helps India promote tourism and projects India's political and cultural narratives globally (Suri, 2011). Another study focused on tourism's contribution to India's GDP, foreign exchange earnings and employment in India. The study shows that tourism contributes culturally and diplomatically and helps in the economic development drive (Mehrad et al., 2023). Moreover, integrating public diplomacy with strategies can help

promote India's positive image in competitive globalisation (Mazumdar, 2020).

India's Cultural and Historical Ties to Buddhism

India is the birthplace of Buddhism and the home of Siddhartha Gautama's teaching of compassion, peace and non-violence. It helps India establish its spiritual depth globally (Pham et al., 2021). On a cultural ground, India is intertwined with Buddhist heritage, which has helped the country position itself as a beacon of enlightenment and peace in the world (Scott. D, 2016). There are many ancient Buddhist sites all over India, like Nalanda, Bodh Gaya and Sarnath, attract pilgrims, tourists and scholars worldwide (Medhekar, 2022). By promoting Buddhist tourism, India can foster its global image as a soft power. It shows India's commitment to promoting and preserving universal values resonating with Buddhist teaching. Buddhist sites spread almost everywhere in India and when it comes to sites in the northeast states, two prominent sites are Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. Both states can help India with tourism through India's Act East Policy. Arunachal Pradesh is one of the most important places in the region, as 17th-century Twang Monastery is the most important Buddhist pilgrim and attraction place in the area. Arunachal also shares a border with Myanmar. As Myanmar is a Buddhist majoritarian country, proper road connectivity through Arunachal, Manipur, and Mizoram can help to increase Southeast countries' religious tourism via road connectivity. Myanmar is a door to Southeast Asian countries for India. It will help develop the economy and infrastructure in the Northeast of India. Sikkim is also known as the Dharma Chakra Centre and the seat of Tibetan Buddhism, the Kagyu sect.

Moreover, the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology in Sikkim is one of the major repositories of Tibetan Buddhist artefacts and literature, contributing to studying Buddhist history and culture. These sites contribute to the preservation of Tibetan Buddhist culture and attract visitors from Southeast Asian countries and pilgrims through road connectivity. The road connectivity helps especially those who cannot afford air tickets. India's deep-rooted

heritage sites of Buddhism offer a unique opportunity to strengthen its cultural and diplomatic ties with Southeast Asian countries (Mazumdar. A., 2018). Promoting Buddhist diplomacy allows New Delhi to develop closer spiritual and cultural connections with these countries. Initiatives for collaboration to restore ancient Buddhist sites, cultural exchange, and the organisation of Buddhist conferences can help create stronger bonds with these countries.

North-Eastern India as a Diplomatic Asset

Many initiatives were taken for north-eastern states in the last few years under India's Act East Policy and the recent G20 summit in India. The northeast region of India is full of natural and cultural treasures. Characterised distinct traditions, diverse ethnic communities, cultural practices, and languages can help India explore more opportunities for tourism diplomacy. Festivals like Hornbill in Nagaland, Bihu in Assam, Losar in Sikkim, Ziro festival in Arunachal Pradesh, and Sengai festival in Manipur showcase the rich heritage, culture and vibrant lifestyle of the people of northeast India. In addition to this, natural beauty, fantastic landscapes like Dzukuo valley, tea gardens of Assam, Loktak lake of Manipur, valleys of Meghalaya and Mizoram, Unakoti in Tripura and majestic peaks of Arunachal Pradesh, including national parks in northeast India offers valuable asset for tourism. By fully exploring the potential of these states, India can leverage it in tourism diplomacy. Cross-border tourism connecting northeast states of India via roads with Southeast Asian countries will help India's to achieve its strategic interests. But there are also challenges. The promotion of Northeast India as a tourist destination is a big hurdle. Limited infrastructure and poor road connectivity due to its remoteness compared to other parts of India are hampering the growth of this region. These challenges are also turning into opportunities, but the pace of development needs to work at the level of war. Such initiatives are expanding air and road connectivity, upcoming railway links to Imphal, Manipur, national highways especially in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and other north-eastern states of India, development of integrated borders check posts infrastructure and Economic Exclusive Zones for business in Arunachal, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram sharing border with Myanmar. In addition, promoting northeast

tourism as adventure tourism, cultural tourism, and eco-tourism can also help India.

How have countries like Thailand and China successfully utilised Buddhism in their tourism diplomacy?

Countries like Thailand and China successfully leveraged Buddhism through tourism diplomacy. Both countries successfully attracted international visitors, which helped them strengthen their ties and enhance their global influence. Buddhism became the cornerstone of Thailand's tourism diplomacy (McCargo, D., 2004). Countries deeply intertwined Buddhist heritage became its cultural identity (Abuan, R. E. M., 2021). Thailand promoted a number of its Buddhist festivals, temples, and traditions, which became key attractions for international tourists. Iconic sites like Wat Pho, Wat Phra Kaew in Bangkok, and Wat Phra That Doi Suthep in Chiang Mai became Thailand's spiritual and cultural legacy symbol (Evrard et al., 2009). Countries' tourism campaigns reflect their image of spiritual, peaceful and prosperous cultural destinations, which helps to draw millions of visitors and helps Thailand in tourism diplomacy (Peleggi. M, 1996). Thailand also played a proactive role in the regional and global Buddhist network by putting efforts into cultural activism. Bangkok successfully organises and hosts international conferences with practitioners worldwide, which helps them to bring together many Buddhist leaders on single stage. Through these efforts, Thailand successfully strengthened its soft power image, which helped the country to concretise its diplomatic and cultural ties with Buddhist-majority countries.

China is a classic example of how Beijing successfully leveraged Buddhist diplomacy after forcefully occupying Tibet and crushing Buddhist cultural identity between 1950 and the 1990s. Single majoritarian Han's government in Beijing realised in the late 1990s how important multi-cultural tourism diplomacy is in establishing a positive image of China in the new world order. As Beijing's past had blood stains of cursing Buddhist culture, Uyghur Muslims of Turkish identity in Xinjiang, Mongolian culture in Inner-Mongolia, and the April 15, 1989, Tiananmen Square massacre, positive

tourism became a medium for their rule policy makers to get away from their past bloody identity. China established several Buddhist and other cultural centres (Ce Qu et al., 2017). Since 2000, synthetic infrastructure in the main cities has forced different communities into cultural centres and helped Beijing to successfully establish its global soft power image. In addition, strategically promoting and giving limited access to tourists in targeted places helped China boost its tourism and strengthen diplomatic relations, especially with major Buddhist countries. Important Buddhist sites like the Longmen Grottoes, the Shaolin Monastery and Mount Wutai are aggressively promoted as spiritual and cultural destinations. China hosted international Buddhist forums and invested in restoring and preserving these sites, which has helped elevate its image in the global Buddhist community. By investing in Buddhist heritage, Beijing attracted millions of pilgrims and used these cultural exchanges to build stronger diplomatic ties with Myanmar, Thailand, Sri Lanka and other Southeast Asian countries (Zhang, J, 2023). It helps China to foster goodwill among the Buddhist-majority countries and allows them to project cultural influence (Raymond. G. V. et al., 2020).

How India can Frames its Buddhist Tourism Diplomacy?

For an effective Buddhist Tourism strategy in the northeast region as a part of broader tourism diplomacy, India needs to work on the promotion and development of Buddhist circuits, cultural showcasing and festival, digital promotion and global outreach, enhancement of infrastructure and connectivity, collaboration with Southeast Asian countries and sustainable tourism practices. India can promote and develop a dedicated Buddhist tourism circuit along with other regional tourist places to highlight important Buddhist places in northeast India. For example, the Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim and Tawang Monastery in Arunachal Pradesh can be planned in the tourism circuit along with the Ziro Festival, Hornbill Festival, Sangai Festival, Shirui Festival Shad Suk Mynsiem Festival, Nongkrem Festival, Chapchar Kut festival, Garia and Bihu festival. Providing tourism packages and adding northeast regional festivals in this circuit will offer unique opportunities for tourists to explore the rich Buddhist heritage and cultural festivals of northeast India. Integrating

these festival sites into tourist circuits, New Delhi can attract tourists and pilgrims from around the world, which will help enhance cultural exchanges and diplomacy (Medhekar. A. et al., 2022).

Promoting and organising cultural festivals to celebrate the Buddhist heritage of northeast India can play a significant role in India's tourism diplomacy. It will help India showcase its unique identity, art, traditions, and crafts in the northeast region. These activities will help enhance people-to-people ties, strengthening India's cultural connections with Buddhist majoritarian countries (Shinde. K. A., 2022).

Internet and social networks revolutionised the meaning of globalisation. Whatever is happening in the corner of the world can be seen from the platforms available on the internet. Considering today's needs, New Delhi must work aggressively on a comprehensive digital marketing campaign to increase digital imprints of the northeast region of India (Agarwal. M. et al., 2010). AI-enabled targeted online advertisements on social media and virtual tours of the northeast, especially Buddhist attraction sites, can help India attract tourists from Buddhist majoritarian countries and other parts of the world (Raffaele. F, 2021). It will also help New Delhi to project its image as a custodian of Buddhist heritage.

There is a need to invest significantly in infrastructure development. However, road connectivity is improving in the remote areas of the northeast; there is a need to work on hospitality infrastructure. In addition, air connectivity to critical Buddhist sites is essential to boost domestic and international tourists in the region. At present, hotels are available at prominent sites, but very few infrastructures are available when we talk about the northeast region. Moreover, it must be affordable for tourists. A competitive market will help the area to generate more revenue. Enhancing local amenities and visitor services will contribute to memorable and comfortable tourist experiences will help elevate India's image (Medhekar. A. et al., 2022).

Closer collaboration with Southeast Asian countries can foster India's Buddhist tourism diplomacy. New Delhi must work aggressively on joint initiatives such as cultural exchange, cross-border tourism packages, and heritage conservation projects on Buddhist tradition. India can also invite participants from Southeast Asian countries to conferences and events on Buddhism in the northeast region. It will help India to concretise its cultural ties with Southeast Asian countries (Shinde. K. A., 2022).

Last but not least, sustainable tourism practices can help northeast India preserve the region's cultural and natural assets (Cajee. L, 2014). Eco-friendly tourism, with the collaboration of local communities and their traditional practices, will help protect the environment (Yugang He, 2022). Projecting northeast India as an example of sustainable tourism can attract environment-conscious tourists. It allows India to demonstrate New Delhi's commitment to preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the region.

Challenges of Buddhist tourism in the Northeast India

Underdeveloped infrastructure and remoteness of the northeast region of India is a primary challenge. Insufficient accessibility due to poor condition of roads, lack of quality accommodation and insufficient transportation network forced tourists not to visit these areas (Haokip. T, 2015). In addition, the monsoon is a boon and enemy to this region. Climate disruption further complicates tourism and travel in these areas (Mili. B. et al., 2017). One more prominent challenge of this region is the visibility and lack of awareness of northeast Buddhist places (Dam. S, 2020). Unlike famous pilgrimage sites like Sarnath and Bodh Gaya, northeast Buddhist sites are less recognised internationally. This is one of the most significant shortcomings of Indian tourism policymakers in promoting Arunachal Pradesh as a heritage tourism site in India to counter-narratives of Beijing's claim on Indian territory. By promoting tourism in this region, India can strengthen its image in the new world order.

Regional instability is another challenge to promoting Buddhist tourism in northeast India. Insurgency movements, ethnic tensions and border disputes

with the Chinese in the forcefully occupied Tibet region are making things more complicated. Ensuring a stable and secure environment for tourist safety is crucial for fostering sustainable regional tourism. Northeast India has diverse ethnic groups with unique traditions, practices, and beliefs. While promoting Buddhist tourism, it is essential to preserve the cultural identities of the groups by ensuring that development does not marginalise the local traditions. In addition, diplomatic considerations need to be managed efficiently as the northeast region of India shares a border with Bhutan, Tibet (occupied by China) and Myanmar. Territorial issues need to be addressed with caution and tensions avoided. In addition, India's border policy must be aligned to complement bilateral and multilateral relations (Das. S. B. et al., 2022).

Conclusion

New Delhi must adopt active tourism diplomacy through the northeast states and Buddhism. There is a need to adopt specific policy measures for the region. Governments (both state and central) need to invest in infrastructure development, comparative accommodation facilities, expanding the transportation network and connecting it to Buddhist sites. The central government UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) scheme needs to communicate with these Buddhist heritage sites to provide economical air connectivity to domestic and international tourists.

A comprehensive targeted marketing strategy needs to be developed to promote Buddhist heritage in northeast India on a global stage. It includes international tourism fair participation, digital campaigns, and collaboration with the worldwide tourism industry to make customised travel packages highlighting India's northeast spiritual and cultural offerings. Domestic tourism industries need to be supported for targeted customer campaigns. There are many other places in northeast India where the Buddhist community lives. New Delhi can establish more pilgrimage circuits that link to these places across the country and Southeast Asia, providing an integrated spiritual tourism experience. India's tourism diplomacy must also work on policies encouraging sustainable and community-based tourism. There is a need for

training in local communities for capacity building, preserving regional culture, and training programs for local entrepreneurs in the hospitality and tourism sectors to promote eco-friendly tourism practices.

India can also explore opportunities through multilateral forums and international organisations to enhance tourism diplomacy through Buddhism and northeast India. UNESCO can assist in promoting and preserving Buddhist heritage sites, which helps to raise India's soft power image on the global stage. Regional cooperation like the Bay of Bangla Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) can help facilitate cross-border dialogues to promote tourism initiatives and cooperation among the Buddhist heritage countries.

Lastly, positioning northeast India as a hub for Buddhist tourism can help New Delhi strengthen its diplomatic ties with East Asian Courtiers and Southeast Asian countries in many folds. It will help increase mutual understanding and people-to-people contact, which will help maintain peace and stability in the region. In addition, developing northeast India as a tourist destination helps to improve the area's economic growth, which directly helps to reduce regional instability, underdevelopment and economic marginalisation.

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CULTURAL TOURISM AS A TOOL OF SOFT POWER: A STUDY OF INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA SINCE 2014

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Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War, the influence of soft power in determining political dynamics in international relations has increased significantly. The same can be seen in regional power politics, and Southeast Asia is not different. With the formation of ASEAN, competition between major powers to influence the region has increased manifold. India, which has had long historical-cultural relations with Southeast Asia since ancient times, has also tried to build stronger diplomatic ties after the Cold War. Along with other strategies like financial and infrastructural support, cultural cooperation, particularly cultural tourism, has been used as a tool to increase its regional influence. The paper focuses on India's initiatives of cultural tourism and its role in establishing soft power in the Southeast Asian region. Historical-cultural ties and growing connectivity provide ample scope for strengthening diplomatic relations with Southeast Asian nations. The paper considers various elements related to cultural tourism and the steps taken by the Indian government since 2014. With the replacement of the Look East Policy (LEP) with the Act East Policy (AEP) in 2014, a major focus has been kept on establishing cultural cooperation with Southeast Asian nations. The paper builds on the above propositions, primarily focusing on cultural tourism and soft power diplomacy.

Keywords- Act East Policy, ASEAN, Cultural Tourism, Cultural Cooperation, Look East Policy, Soft Power.

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Introduction

With the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, Southeast Asia has brought itself to the global level as a prominent region, gaining the interest and attention of major powers in the world (Hussain, 2017). Among the major powers, India and China have a more prominent interest in the region, leading to growing power politics and changing dynamics in the Southeast Asian region (Chuyong et al., 2022). The region has attracted financial investment and other initiatives from the major powers to increase their influence. China, already an established regional power, and India, aspiring to become a regional power, constantly compete to establish strong diplomatic relations with countries falling in Southeast Asia (Grossman, 2023). Both countries have used various approaches and tools to influence Southeast Asian nations. ‘Cultural tourism’ is one of the tools that is used by both countries to enhance their engagement with Southeast Asia. The United Nations Tourism General Assembly defines Cultural Tourism as “the movements of people for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages (2017).” It is argued that the strong cultural ties with the ASEAN states can help India deepen its diplomatic relations in the region (Bhonsale, 2019). India has several things in common, primarily related to culture, with the Southeast Asian nations, which can be utilised and enhanced by making cultural tourism more effective and prominent. The Indian government has taken various initiatives to establish stronger ties with the countries of Southeast Asia, in which cultural tourism plays an important role. Cultural Tourism is an important element of Act East Policy (2014). The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasised three pillars of this policy: Commerce, Culture, and Connectivity (Ministry of External Affairs, 2015).

Two central pillars of the Act East Policy are culture and connectivity, through which India seeks to expand its diplomatic relations with Southeast Asia. Most countries in the region practice Buddhism, whereas Buddhism spread in these nations from India, providing one of the avenues for strengthening ties using

culture. Apart from culture, the Indian government has launched various connectivity projects like the '*Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (2008)*' and '*India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highways (2002)*' to make travel much easier and more effective with the nations in this region (Naskar, 2018). These connectivity projects were initiated with dual objectives. On the one hand, it would link India's landlocked Northeastern part with the mainstream economy; on the other hand, it would counter growing Chinese influence in Southeast Asia. However, due to political unrest in Myanmar and lack of funding on the Southeast Asian side, the projects are yet to be completed.

Both culture and connectivity can play a prominent role in enhancing cultural tourism between India and Southeast Asian nations. Southeast Asian nations contain a prominent influence of Indian culture in their art and architecture, which can be further utilised to enhance cultural tourism in the region. Making this cultural heritage a prominent element in the growth of tourism between India and her Southeast Asian neighbours would help in enhancing India's soft power in the region (Maini, 2016).

This research paper aims to analyse and understand the role of cultural tourism as a tool of soft power in enhancing diplomatic relations, with particular reference to India's initiatives in the Southeast Asian region since 2014. The paper also aims to analyse the present status of cultural tourism and the flow of tourists from Southeast Asia to India. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section includes a brief history of cultural ties between India and Southeast Asia. The second section discusses the changes introduced by the Indian government while shifting from the LEP to AEP. The third section sheds light on the initiatives taken by the government of India to promote cultural tourism as a tool of Soft Power diplomacy. The fourth section discusses the present challenges and future opportunities for India to enhance its soft power in the region through tourism. The paper uses descriptive-analytical methods of research, using official documents, Thinktank reports, and scholarly literature.

India-Southeast Asia Historical-Cultural Engagement

India and Southeast Asia have had a historical-cultural connection since the first century B.C. (Bjpai, 1991). During this period, India was connected with Southeast Asia by sea route, which allowed Indian traders to establish maritime trade with Southeast Asia (Rajan, 2019). More importantly, it provided an opportunity for Indians and Southeast Asians to synthesise their culture with each other (Kossak, 2001). Thus, Indian culture has greatly impacted the political, social and cultural sphere of Southeast Asia (Braginsky, 2013).

At the social and political level, Indian merchants contributed to the formation of a political system based on the Indian model (Braginsky, 2013). This was possible because the Brahmins and Buddhist monks who came with Indian traders also “brought their religions, arts, architecture, and political system, and the rich religious literature of India to the region” (Kossak, 2001). The cultural assimilations not only impacted the political and social sphere of Southeast Asia but also impacted the “architectural treasures of Angkor, Borobudur and Prambanan” (Kumar & Siddique, 2008). Not only Indians travelled to Southeast Asia, but also the Southeast Asian believers of Hinduism and Buddhism travelled to many sacred places in India. Consequently, both regions remained connected through culture for the ‘next thousand years’ (Kossak, 2001).

At the cultural level, same as the political and social sphere, ‘cultural absorption’ also happened with some changes in its original form (Ooi, 2004). These transformations in Southeast Asian culture, political system, art and literature have been introduced by the Indian religion – Hinduism and Buddhism (Braginsky, 2013). Hinduism and Buddhism, the Indian form of state and law, art and culture, influenced Southeast Asian elites, resulting in the formation of a new culture (Braginsky, 2013), which later impacted almost the entire Southeast Asian polity, society and culture. This helped in the formation of homogeneous culture and similar state systems in the Southeast Asian region.

This shows that India and Southeast Asia have greater political, religious, cultural and social connections. This cultural connection strengthened India-Southeast Asia relations for many centuries (Lamb, 1975). But This connection did not always remain the same. It was badly impacted during the British rule in India. However, the independence movements in both regions realign them for a short period (Khalid, 2011). Thus, India hosted the ‘Asian Relations Conference’ in March 1947. To address the issue of colonialism, soon after its independence from British rule, India participated in a Special Conference on Indonesia in 1949 (Hussain, 2017). However, the Cold War negatively impacted India-Southeast relations, which was improved during independence movements in both regions. India alleged some Southeast Asian states to be on the capitalist side, which was led by the U.S.A., while they alleged that India indirectly supports the communist camp led by the Soviet Union. (Bawa, 2013). However, both regions again came closer after the end of the Cold War. Due to the deteriorating economic conditions of India and the economic prosperity of Southeast Asia, India started to show its interest in engaging Southeast Asia. Consequently, India launched its Look East Policy in 1991, which emphasises promoting economic, political and cultural connections with East and Southeast Asia.

From Look East to Act East: Promoting Soft Power through Cultural Connectivity/Cultural Tourism

Joseph Nye (2008) has defined Soft Power as “the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment.” According to Nye (2004), “culture, political values, and foreign policy are three sources of soft power for a country.” In the case of India-Southeast relations, India derives its soft power from the ancient cultural link between them (Bhonsale, 2019). India, since its independence, has taken various initiatives to strengthen cultural connectivity between both regions. One of those initiatives is that India has signed various cultural agreements and Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with the ASEAN states (Table 1). The Look East/Act East Policy has enhanced all these initiatives, which helped India in achieving its strategic interests in Southeast Asia (Mazumdar, 2015).

The Look East Policy (1991) has Cultural, Political, Economic and Strategic dimensions. However, strategic and economic dimensions of it remained dominant in Look East discourse (Acharya, 2015). In the first phase, India prioritised institutional and economic measures to connect with Southeast Asian states (Bajpae, 2017). After the introduction of the Look East Policy in 1991, the ASEAN provided 'sectoral dialogue partner' status to India in 1992; since then, India-ASEAN trade relations have improved significantly (ASEAN, 2015). During the first decade of LEP, the bilateral trade between India and ASEAN reached to US\$ 12.1 billion in 2003. It was only US\$2.9 billion in 1993 (ASEAN, n.d.). In the second phase, which started in 2003, India emphasised Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and security relations with ASEAN (Bajpae, 2017). India and ASEAN signed a Free Trade Agreement in 2009 called as 'ASEAN-India Free Trade Area (AIFTA)', which has been in effect since 1 January 2010 (Ahmed, 2010). In the last year of the Look East policy in 2013-14, the bilateral trade between both regions remained at US\$74 billion (ASEAN-India Centre, 2015), which grew up to US\$131.5 billion in 2022-23, which makes 11.3 percent of India's total global during 2022-23 (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2023).

Economic and strategic dimensions have greater importance in Look East Policy (Haokip, 2011). However, many scholars argued that the LEP has also promoted cultural and religious ties between both regions. According to the annual report of 1999-2000 of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, cultural delegates from Southeast Asian states, particularly from Myanmar, Singapore, and Vietnam, travelled to many sacred places in India. This can be seen as a strategic initiative to strengthen cultural ties between the two regions (Ministry of External Affairs, n. d). Apart from this, student exchange programmes have also been taking place between the two regions, which strengthens people-to-people contact between India and Southeast Asia. It also promotes India's cultural reach in Southeast Asia (Ha, 2014).

Table 1: *Cultural Agreements between India and Southeast Asian countries*

Cultural Agreement between India and Cambodia	31 January 1996
Agreement Concerning Cultural Relations between India and Indonesia	29 December 1955
Cultural Agreement between India and Malaysia	30 March 1978
Agreement between India and Myanmar on Cultural Cooperation	25 January 2001
Cultural Agreement between India and the Philippines	6 September 1969
MOU between India and Singapore Concerning Cooperation in the Fields of the Arts, Heritage and the Archives	5 February 1993
Cultural Agreement between India and Thailand	29 April 1997
Cultural Agreement between India and Vietnam	18 December 1976
MoU on restoration of UNESCO World Heritage Site at Vat Phu (Laos)	May 2007
MoU on Cultural Cooperation with Brunei	May 2008

Source: Ministry of Culture, Government of India. <https://www.indiaculture.nic.in/cultural-agreement>

Besides student exchange programmes and delegates' visits, India also provides financial and technical support for the renovation of temples and Buddhist sites in various Southeast Asian nations (Vasudevan, et al., 2012). India also assisted Preah Vihear Temple, Cambodia and advocated for the

UNESCO World Heritage status for the same (Kundu, 2022). This shows India's commitment to continue its relations with Southeast Asia based on shared culture.

It is evident that the Look East Policy has stressed on institutional, economic, strategic and cultural relations between the two regions. Still, the economic and strategic dimensions were dominant. However, the whole policy was formulated in such a manner that “while commerce, connectivity, and capacity-building continue to propel the India-ASEAN relations to new milestones, culture and religion provide mental and spiritual fodder to nurture its growing engagement” (Chand, 2014). Thus, LEP brought India and Southeast Asia closer economically, politically, and culturally.

With the advent of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014, a renewed emphasis was given to India-Southeast Asia relations. Subsequently, the ‘Look East policy’ was renamed as the ‘Act East Policy’ (Parameswaran, 2014). However, the Act East did not alter the main objectives of Look East – Commerce, Culture and Connectivity. It also emphasises all these three pillars while engaging with Southeast Asia (Naskar, 2018). However, the qualitative difference between the ‘Look East’ and the ‘Act East’ is “the conviction of the present government that India's relations with her neighbours should be marked by action and dynamism rather than confining to the sobriety of gaze towards them” (De & Chirathivat, 2018). In this spirit, Prime Minister Modi has explained the Act East Policy, which is based on three pillars indicated by three ‘Cs’ – ‘Commerce’, ‘Culture’ and ‘Connectivity’ (Rajendram, 2014).

The cultural domain of the Act East works as a common platform for both India and its East and Southeast Asia neighbours (Acharya, 2015). Culture can be used to strengthen and rediscover historical links between both regions (Jha, 2014). Particularly, the Act East emphasised cultural aspects, which serve as an important element of India's soft power diplomacy (ASEAN-India Center 2019). In fact, “one of the defining points of India's Act East Policy is to project the country as an emerging soft power and activate her cultural assets and stringing them with her history in the Southeast Asian region” (ASEAN-

India Center, 2019), which China has been doing successfully for many decades.

China has aggressively promoted its cultural heritages, especially Buddhism, with Southeast Asian states. Buddhism has been used for “image management” by the communist governments of China since its formation in 1949 (Ding, 2011). Besides its own image-building, it has also been used as a propagandist and geopolitical tool against other major powers, such as the US, Japan, and India, to limit their influence in Southeast Asia (Lijun, 2015). To counter the political and strategic use of Buddhism against India, the Indian government has strongly emphasised the promotion of its shared culture – Buddhism – in its bilateral and multilateral relations with Southeast Asian states. However, against the Chinese version of Buddhist diplomacy, India promotes the genuine elements of Buddhism through its foreign policies (Scott, 2016), the Look East and Act East. The government of India has taken various initiatives to promote Buddhism in its cultural diplomacy. One of these initiatives is the promotion of cultural tourism, which focuses on people-to-people contact between India and Southeast Asian states.

Government of India’s Initiatives to Promote Cultural Tourism since 2014

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has actively promoted India’s rich cultural heritage, especially its Buddhist heritage, with East and Southeast Asian neighbours (Kasturi, 2015). Thus, Buddhism has become an important pillar of the Act East Policy. The Indian government promotes ‘Buddhist tourism’ as a form of Cultural Tourism (Chaudhary, 2017). In this spirit, three Buddhist Circuits were identified in 2015 by the Indian Ministry of Tourism (Press Information Bureau, 2015). These circuits have been developed to “showcase India as a land of Buddha and a destination for spiritual and cultural tourism (Niti Aayog, 2022)”. Three identified circuits are the Buddhist Heritage Trails (State Circuit), the Extended Dharmayatra (Extended Sacred Circuit/Retracing Buddha's Footsteps), and the Dharmayatra (The Sacred Circuit) (Press Information Bureau, 2015). These circuits include visits to various sacred places related to Buddhism. Such places are Bodhgaya, Nalanda, Rajgir

(Bihar), Sarnath, Kushinagar (Uttar Pradesh), Lumbini (Nepal), Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir), Dharmashala (Himachal Pradesh), Aurangabad (Maharashtra), Tawang and Bomdila (Arunachal Pradesh) etc (Press Information Bureau, 2015). Besides Buddhist circuits, tourists also visit nearby destinations such as Khajuraho and Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh, Taj Mahal in Agra, Ajanta and Ellora caves in Maharashtra (Ministry of Tourism, n. d.).

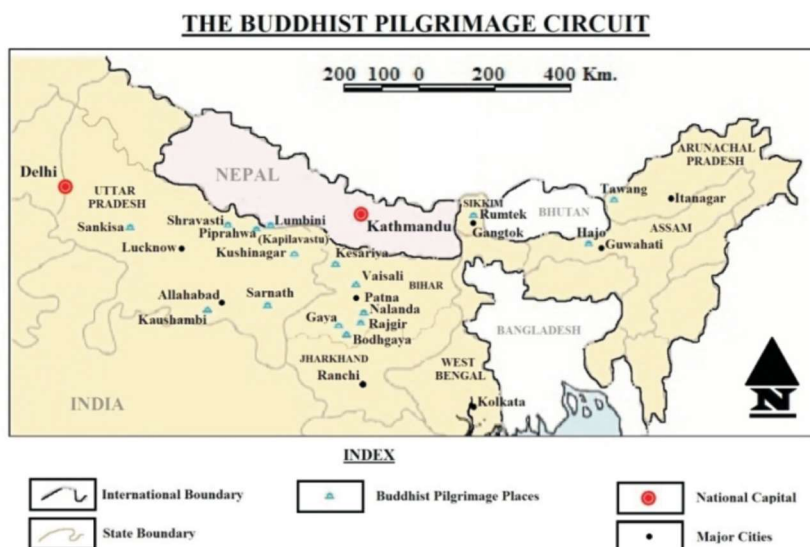


Figure 1: Map of Buddhist Pilgrimage Circuits

Source: Top Travels and Tours (P) Ltd.- Buddhist Pilgrimage Circuit, http://www.buddhisttrain.com/images/buddhist_map_big.jpg

Apart from the circuits, the government of India continuously organise Buddhist conclaves and conferences to project India as the ‘Land of Buddha’ and to attract participants and cultural tourists from all over the world, particularly from East and Southeast Asian states (Press Information Bureau, 2014). One such conference is the International Buddhist Conclaves which the Ministry of Tourism has been continuously organising since 2004 (Kundu,

2022). Prime Minister Modi himself attended the Bodhgaya conclave in 2015 (Tewary, 2015), which shows his keen interest in promoting Buddhist heritage as India's soft power.

Besides these measures at the domestic level, the Indian government has taken various steps to promote its tourism destinations at the global level. For example, India signed a MoU with ASEAN in 2012 for cooperation in the tourism sector (Press Information Bureau, 2012), which aims to facilitate tourist visits, information sharing and strengthening partnerships. Apart from MoU, India and ASEAN together organise two Joint Working Group meetings every year.

Due to various initiatives taken by the government of India, India evidenced an increase in the number of foreign tourists during the Act East period. In the year 2017, 10.04 million foreign tourists visited India, which was 14 percent higher than in 2016 (Ministry of Tourism, 2018). Among them, Southeast Asia (8.22 percent) had the fourth-highest share of foreign tourist arrivals to India in 2017. In 2022-23, 6.43 million foreign tourists visited India, among them Southeast Asia has a share of 6.41 percent (Ministry of Tourism, 2023). Also, the Buddhist circuits identified by the government of India attract a yearly average of 6.5 percent of total foreign tourist arrivals to India.

Challenges and Opportunities

In the globalised world, Tourism, especially cultural tourism, has become an essential element of soft power diplomacy. Most countries use cultural tourism as a form of soft power to enhance people-to-people contact with other countries (Ha, 2022). From Look East to Act East, India has also promoted cultural tourism as a tool for enhancing its soft power in Southeast Asia. We have seen in the above sections that India has long historical-cultural links with Southeast Asia since ancient times. Buddhism is one of the aspects of the cultural links between the two regions, which India uses as a tool of soft power/cultural diplomacy. The Indian government has taken various initiatives to promote its Buddhist heritage with its Southeast Asian neighbours. In this regard, the government of India has identified and developed Buddhist Circuits

to attract cultural tourists from all over the world, especially Buddhist-majority countries of East and Southeast Asia (Press Information Bureau, 2015).

Despite these, India faces challenges in Southeast Asia from its international competitors. China continuously presents tough competition to India's promotion of Buddhism as a tool of soft power in Southeast Asia. Its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is an infrastructure-led initiative, also incorporates cultural diplomacy efforts, particularly the promotion of its Buddhist sites (Mazumder & Upadhyaya, 2019). Chinese Yunnan province, which has a historical connection with Southeast Asia, has also been promoted as a Buddhist heritage site to attract cultural and religious tourists from ASEAN states (Song, 2021). Apart from these efforts, the government of China actively promotes digital tourism platforms such as virtual tours, digital exhibitions, and targeted marketing campaigns to attract Southeast Asian cultural tourists. Moreover, China's hosting of international Buddhist forums and conclaves, which attract participants from across East and Southeast Asia, enhances its image as a leader of global Buddhism (Ashiwa & Wonk, 2020). These efforts directly challenge India's attempts to promote cultural heritage in Southeast Asian states.

Despite the challenges from the Chinese side, there are several opportunities for India to promote its cultural tourism in Southeast Asia. Firstly, India can focus on improving the infrastructure, like transport connectivity and accommodation facilities, around its Buddhist circuits so it can be more attractive to Southeast Asian tourists. Investment in tourism infrastructure not only attracts tourists from all over the world but would also help India to compete with China's well-developed tourism facilities (Johri, 2020). Additionally, India can promote the cultural and spiritual significance of its Buddhist sites, emphasising India as the Land of Buddha. This unique position would help India in fostering deeper cultural connections with Buddhist-majority countries of Southeast Asia (Mahaseth & Khatoon, 2024). Secondly, India should also collaborate with Southeast Asian nations by co-hosting Buddhist festivals, exhibitions and cultural exchanges. This would enhance India's diplomatic ties with Southeast Asia. Furthermore, India can expand its digital outreach by creating virtual tours, documentaries on various Buddhist

sites and online campaigns to promote its Buddhist destinations. This would globally enhance India's visibility as a destination for Buddhist tourism. These combined efforts would help India counterbalance China's influence and solidify its role as a key player in Buddhist cultural tourism in Southeast Asia.

Conclusion

The long-standing historical linkages between India and ASEAN apparently offer India several advantages in terms of tourism and soft power. Notwithstanding, British rule in India abruptly suspended some of the flourishing trade routes and cultural exchanges; the recent decades of Indian foreign policy evidently attempted to rejuvenate the glorious historical ties. The 1990s reforms in the Indian economy led India to find alternative trade partners to collaborate which is clearly visible in the shift from Look East to Act East policy. While tourism activities are seen as a boon for any economy, they can also be utilised for soft power enhancement. Indian historical legacy to ASEAN in the form of the spread of Hinduism and Buddhism is immensely beneficial for the tapping into the soft power within the ASEAN region. The growing Chinese influence in the region, due to its economic and soft power manoeuvres, could be contained through a reinvigorated focus on these untapped possibilities in international politics. The policy alternative and fusion are the contemporary requirements of the Indian foreign policy which can divert its energy from isolated individual projects and can assimilate the diverse set of approaches into one whole plan of action. The connectivity projects, strategic ties, tourist exchanges and cultural revival should go hand in hand to boost the Indian soft power in the region. The ASEAN is one of the most successful regional organisations and has tremendous market potential as the region remained stable from any major war except a military coup in Myanmar; it can provide a stage for long-term partnerships for India.

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बौद्ध धर्म एवं सांस्कृतिक सॉफ्ट पावर : भारत और चीन

हिमांशु द्विवेदी*

सारांश

बदलती विश्व व्यवस्था में महाशक्तियों के बीच बीते दशकों में तेजी से संघर्ष बढ़ रहा है और नई महाशक्तियाँ विश्व व्यवस्था में अपना योगदान बढ़ाने का प्रयास कर रही हैं। भारत और चीन एशियाई शक्ति के रूप में अपनी पैठ को पुष्ट करने के उपरांत अब विश्व पटल पर महाशक्ति के रूप में तेजी से आगे बढ़ रहे हैं। किंतु चीन ने पिछले कुछ दशकों में जिस प्रकार तीव्र छलांग लगाई है, भारत उसके मुकाबले लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों के साथ सतत विकास की दिशा में आगे बढ़ा है। महाशक्ति बनने के लिए कई सारे घटक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं, जिनमें से संस्कृति एक महत्वपूर्ण पक्ष के रूप में है। जिसकी आगे इस लेख में विस्तृत चर्चा की जानी है कि किस प्रकार से चीन द्वारा बीते दशक से बौद्ध धर्म को लेकर सांस्कृतिक सर्वोच्चता दिखाने और दक्षिण पूर्वी एशिया में बौद्ध धर्म को लेकर अपनी महत्ता बढ़ाने का प्रयास किया जा रहा है जो कि भारत के लिए एक बड़ी चुनौती प्रस्तुत कर रहा है, जो दोनों देशों के मध्य सॉफ्ट पावर को बढ़ाकर एशिया में अपना प्रभाव और वर्चस्व स्थापित करके सांस्कृतिक श्रेष्ठता को स्थापित करने की प्रतिद्वंद्विता से संबंधित है।

मुख्य शब्द: चीन, सॉफ्ट पावर, सांस्कृतिक सुरक्षा, बौद्ध धर्म, दक्षिण पूर्वी एशिया, वैश्विक व्यवस्था

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प्रस्तावना

चीन ने जिस तेजी के साथ अपना आर्थिक विकास किया है, वह आज दुनिया के सामने अमेरिकी सर्वोच्चता को चुनौती देने वाले एक विकल्प के रूप में अपना स्थान बनाने में सक्षम हुआ है। किंतु यह विकास कितना टिकाऊ और भविष्योन्मुख रहने वाला है, यह आने वाला भविष्य ही तय करेगा। आज देश हार्ड पॉवर के साथ ही साथ सॉफ्ट पावर को बढ़ाने का प्रयास कर रहा है। अंतर्राष्ट्रीय राजनीति में सॉफ्ट पॉवर की अवधारणा का श्रेय 'जोसेफ नाई' को दिया जाता है। जिन्होंने बदलते विश्व परिदृश्य में शक्ति की शास्त्रीय अवधारणा से आगे बढ़कर राष्ट्रों के सॉफ्ट पावर को बढ़ाने की आवश्यकता पर बल दिया है। सॉफ्ट पावर का आशय सैन्य शक्ति को बढ़ाने की शास्त्रीय अवधारणा से आगे निकलकर सांस्कृतिक, पर्यटन, ऐतिहासिक विरासत, कूटनीति के क्षेत्र में राष्ट्र की शक्तियों को बढ़ाने से है। चीन ने पिछले दशक में इस क्षेत्र को मजबूत करने के लिए अपनी राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा नीति (2008) में सांस्कृतिक सुरक्षा को जोड़ा है। जिससे यह स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि अब चीन अपनी सॉफ्ट पावर का विस्तार करके विश्व पटल पर अपनी सांस्कृतिक श्रेष्ठता की वैधता को स्थापित करना चाहता है। हालांकि चीन के तीव्र विकास के साथ ही वहां आंतरिक समस्याएं पैदा हुईं, जो कुछ हद तक सांस्कृतिक और धार्मिक कारणों से भी प्रभावित थीं। जिससे निपटने के लिए चीन अब अपनी सांस्कृतिक विरासत को प्रमुखता देकर लोगों में एकता का भाव पुष्ट करने का प्रयास भी कर रहा है।

भारतीय संस्कृति, प्राचीन संस्कृतियों में से एक है। भारतीय सांस्कृतिक विरासत जितनी प्राचीन है, उतनी ही महान और धार्मिक भी है। भारतीय समाज सर्व-समावेशी समाज रहा है, जिसमें नए गुणों को अपनाने की क्षमता के साथ ही साथ दोषों को दूर करने की भी क्षमता है। भारत में हिन्दू धर्म के साथ ही साथ अनेक धर्म पल्लवित तथा पुष्पित हुए हैं। जिनमें से बौद्ध धर्म भी एक है। बौद्ध धर्म की उत्पत्ति हिंदू धर्म में व्याप्त अवगुणों को दूर करने से हुई। बौद्ध धर्म भारत से उत्पन्न होकर आज पूरे विश्व में प्रचलित है। बौद्ध धर्म के अनुयायी विश्व भर में फैले हुए हैं, जो महात्मा बुद्ध की शिक्षाओं को लोगों तक पहुंचाने का काम कर रहे हैं। बौद्ध धर्म दक्षिण पूर्वी एशिया में सर्वाधिक प्रचलित एवं मान्यता प्राप्त धर्मों में से एक है। वर्तमान भारतीय सरकार ने भारत की इस अद्भुत

विरासत एवं सांस्कृतिक क्षमता को पहचानते हुए सॉफ्ट पॉवर के रूप में देश को विश्व पटल पर आगे ले जाने के लिए प्रयास किए हैं। चीन ने जिस तेजी के साथ स्वयं को बौद्ध धर्म का मुख्य संरक्षक एवं बौद्ध मतावलंबियों का मुखिया बनकर उभरने का प्रयास कर रहा है, वह चीन की राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा नीति का ही एक हिस्सा है। चीन की लगभग 33% जनसंख्या बौद्ध मतानुयायी है। चीन में बौद्ध धर्म भारतीय बौद्ध धर्म से कुछ अलग चीनी समुदाय के गुण लिए हुए प्रचलित हुआ। जिसमें हण बौद्ध धर्म प्रमुख रूप से चीन में प्रचलित हुआ। जो समाज में परिवार की अवधारणा और पूर्वजों के महत्व को अपने गुणों में अवशोषित किए हुए आगे बढ़ा। चीन की ऐतिहासिक विरासत प्राचीन समय से ही समृद्ध रही है, किंतु समय के साथ तीव्र विकास की दौड़ में सांस्कृतिक विरासत को चीन में लम्बे समय तक उचित स्थान नहीं मिल पाया, जो वर्तमान समय में चीन की राजनीति में चिंता का प्रमुख विषय बना हुआ है। जिस प्रकार से माओ जेडोंग ने 1966-1976 के सांस्कृतिक क्रांति के दौरान बौद्ध विहारों को तोड़ा जिससे कि पूंजीवाद और परंपरागत ढांचों को समाप्त किया जा सके। वामपंथी विचारधारा का हमेशा से यह मानना रहा है कि धर्म राज्य, सरकार, समाज को कमजोर करता है। इसलिए कम्युनिस्ट नेताओं से नास्तिकवादी बने रहने की उम्मीद की जाती रही है। चीन के पहले कम्युनिस्ट नेता माओत्से तुंग ने धर्म को पूरी तरह से नष्ट करने का प्रयास किया था। उन्होंने नास्तिकतावाद को बढ़ावा दिया था। किंतु वर्तमान चीनी कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी ने सांस्कृतिक महत्व की व्यापकता को देखते हुए बौद्ध विहारों को चीनी तरीके से पुनर्निर्मित एवं पुनर्जीवित करने का कार्य किया है। बीते कुछ सालों से चीन में धर्म पार्टी की सख्ती के बावजूद फला-फूला है। चीन में बौद्ध धर्म को ऐसा विदेशी धर्म माना जाता है, जिसकी ग्रामीण वर्ग के बीच सबसे ज्यादा स्वीकार्यता है। चीन में बौद्ध धर्म दूसरी शताब्दी में आया था। जो चीन के क्षेत्रीय गुणों को अपने आप में समाहित करने के साथ ही चीनी बौद्ध गुणों को लिए हुए प्रसारित हुआ। लंबे समयांतराल के बाद चीन की राजनीति में धार्मिक पहलुओं को फिर से जगह मिल रही है। चीन की शक्ति संतुलन की अवधारणा में 21वीं शताब्दी में व्यापक बदलाव देखा गया तथा सांस्कृतिक विरासत को पुनर्जीवित करते हुए, चीन की अंतर्राष्ट्रीय जगत में सॉफ्ट पावर की क्षमता को बढ़ाने की दिशा में कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी द्वारा लगातार प्रयास किए जा रहे हैं।

इसी क्रम में चीन ने बौद्ध धर्म की विश्व व्यापकता को देखते हुए, चीन के हेनान प्रांत में 128 मीटर की विश्व की सबसे बड़ी बौद्ध प्रतिमा का 2008 में अनावरण किया। जो 'सिंग टेंपल बुद्ध' के नाम से प्रसिद्ध है जो दुनिया भर के पर्यटकों के लिए आकर्षण का केंद्र होने के साथ ही साथ बौद्ध मतावलंबियों के लिए धार्मिक स्थल भी है। इसके माध्यम से चीन विश्व में बौद्ध धर्म मतावलंबियों के प्रमुख हितधारक के रूप में बनकर उभरने का प्रयास कर रहा है। इसके साथ ही लेशान के विशालकाय बुद्ध प्रतिमा और गुफाओं को भी विश्व पटल पर लाने के लिए तेजी से पर्यटन सुविधाओं को बढ़ाने का प्रयास निरंतर किया जा रहा है। चीन ने अपनी बौद्ध सांस्कृतिक कूटनीति के तहत 2006 में पहली बार अंतर्राष्ट्रीय बौद्ध सम्मेलन का आयोजन किया। जो पूरे विश्व के लिए आचार्य का विषय रहा क्योंकि चीन कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी द्वारा शासित देश है। इसी क्रम में मार्च, 2024 में हेनान में एशिया के बौद्ध भिक्षुओं का सम्मेलन हुआ, जिसके अंतर्गत प्रमुख बौद्ध भिक्षुओं ने यह निर्णय लिया की बौद्ध धर्म के विश्व भर में प्रचार एवं प्रसार में बीजिंग महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाएगा। यह सम्मेलन 'बोओ फोरम फॉर एशिया वार्षिक सम्मेलन' का ही एक हिस्सा है। जिसमें पहली बार नेपाल, श्रीलंका, जापान, वियतनाम, कंबोडिया, साउथ कोरिया से बौद्ध भिक्षुओं ने भी हिस्सा लिया। जो चीन की बौद्ध धर्म से संबंधित सॉफ्ट कूटनीति का एक कारगर हिस्सा बना है। इसी क्रम में चीन में बौद्ध ग्रंथों का बड़े पैमाने पर अनुवाद, बौद्ध विचारों का व्यापक प्रसार, धार्मिक एकता तथा बुद्ध की इक्षाओं को सार्थक रूप देने का निर्णय किया गया, जिससे कि बौद्ध मत को पूर्वी एशियाई देशों में प्रचलित धर्म के साथ जोड़ने का प्रयास किया जा सके। चीन ने बौद्ध धर्म के प्रसार हेतु संस्कृत और बौद्ध शिक्षाओं को शैक्षिक जगत में विश्व विख्यात चीनी विश्वविद्यालयों में सम्मिलित भी किया है। इन कदमों के माध्यम से चीन धार्मिक सर्वोच्चता और पूर्वी एशियाई देशों में धार्मिक एकरूपता के माध्यम से देशों को प्रभावित कर विश्व व्यवस्था में अपना शक्ति संतुलन बेहतर करने का प्रयास कर रहा है।

विश्व व्यवस्था में बीते दशकों में भारत का स्थान तेजी से मजबूत होने के साथ ही साथ पूरा विश्व चीन के तेजी से बढ़ते प्रभाव को संतुलित करने के लिए भारत की ओर आशा की निगाहों से देख रहा है। आज भारत जिस तेजी के साथ अपनी विश्वगुरु बनने की राह पर आगे बढ़ा है और विश्व जगत में भी भारत की स्वीकार्यता बढ़ी है, वह कहीं न कहीं नियम आधारित विश्व व्यवस्था के लिए एक सुखद खबर है क्योंकि चीन नियम

आधारित विश्व व्यवस्था का खण्डन इस तर्क के साथ करता है कि ये नियम पश्चिमी जगत द्वारा अपने लाभों और उद्देश्यों को पूरा करने के लिए पूरे विश्व समुदाय पर थोपे गए हैं, साथ ही चीन इस नियम निर्माण में भागीदार नहीं रहा है। विश्व व्यवस्था की अराजक स्थिति को देखते हुए विश्व के अधिकांश देशों के मध्य नियम आधारित विश्व व्यवस्था को मानने पर आम सहमति बनी हुई है। भारत सदैव से नियम आधारित विश्व व्यवस्था का समर्थन करता रहा है क्योंकि इससे किसी भी अराजक स्थिति से बचा जा सकता है। 1990 के दशक के उपरांत भारत ने अपनी अर्थव्यवस्था को खोलते हुए पूरे विश्व के साथ तेजी से जुड़ने की दिशा में जो कदम बढ़ाया है, उसी का परिणाम है कि भारत आज तेजी के साथ आर्थिक विकास की राह पर आगे बढ़ रहा है। साथ ही साथ भारत सदैव से शांतिप्रिय देश रहा है। जो भारत के धर्मों के रीढ़ की हड्डी भी रही है।

बौद्ध धर्म की उत्पत्ति भारत में ही हुई है, और यहीं से आगे निकलकर बौद्ध धर्म चीन पहुंचा। जिसमें बौद्ध भिक्षुओं का महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा है। जिन्होंने बौद्ध की शिक्षाओं को पूर्वी एशियाई देशों तक प्रचारित एवं प्रसारित किया। भारत प्राचीन काल से ही बौद्ध शिक्षाओं का केंद्र रहा है। नालंदा, तक्षशिला, विक्रमशिला आदि जैसे महान प्राचीन विश्वविद्यालय भारतीय संस्कृति का हिस्सा रहे हैं। जहां देश विदेश से विद्यार्थी शिक्षा ग्रहण करने प्राचीन समय में आते रहे हैं। चीन के कई विद्वानों ने भी यहां से शिक्षा ग्रहण की है। किंतु बाह्य आक्रमणों के द्वारा नालंदा विश्वविद्यालय को इतिहास से मिटाने के प्रयास किए गए। महात्मा बुद्ध का जन्मस्थान और निर्वाण स्थान इसी भारत भूमि में स्थित है। वर्तमान सरकार ने अपनी विदेश नीति में व्यापक बदलाव लाते हुए भारत की इस क्षमता और बुद्धिजीविता को विश्व पटल पर लाने के प्रयासों को दिशा में कई महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किए हैं। जिससे चीन की बौद्ध धर्म में विश्व सर्वोच्चता और महात्मा बुद्ध की शिक्षाओं को अपने हितों की पूर्ति के अनुरूप व्याख्यायित करते हुए पूर्वी एशियाई देशों के बीच स्वयं को बौद्ध धर्म का मुख्य संरक्षक दिखाने की इस नीति से निपटा जा सके। आसियान(आसियान) देशों की एक बड़ी जनसंख्या बौद्ध मतानुयायी है। आसियान मंच के माध्यम से भी चीन अपनी रणनीति को कारगर करने का लगातार प्रयास कर रहा है। किंतु भारत की आसियान देशों के प्रति अच्छी पहुंच और सांस्कृतिक एकरूपता को ध्यान रखते हुए भारतीय सरकार ने बौद्ध धर्म को भारतीय विदेश नीति का अहम हिस्सा मानते हुए नीति निर्माण का कार्य किया है। महात्मा बुद्ध की जन्मस्थली

होने के कारण और बौद्ध शिक्षाओं का प्राचीन केंद्र होने की वजह से पूर्वी एशियाई देशों से बड़ी संख्या में पर्यटक इन पवित्र स्थानों के दर्शन हेतु प्रति वर्ष आते हैं। इसको मद्देनजर रखते हुए वर्तमान भारत सरकार ने 'बुद्ध सर्किट' की परियोजना का शुभारंभ किया। जिसके अंतर्गत रेल मंत्रालय और पर्यटन विभाग के साथ ही सांस्कृतिक मामलों से संबंधित मंत्रालय के द्वारा भगवान बुद्ध के जीवन वृत्तांत से जुड़े हुए स्थानों को आपस में परिवहन की व्यवस्था से जोड़ा गया है, जिससे विदेशी पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देने के साथ ही साथ इन स्थानों के सामरिक महत्व को भी उचित स्थान दिया जा सके। महात्मा बुद्ध के जीवन से निर्वाण तक के स्थानों को इस परियोजना के माध्यम से जोड़ने का प्रयास किया गया है। वाराणसी में स्थित सारनाथ बौद्ध भिक्षुओं के लिए पवित्र स्थल है। जो विदेशी पर्यटन का एक महत्वपूर्ण केंद्र बना हुआ है। भारत सरकार के द्वारा आधारभूत संरचना के विकास के क्रम में इन सभी स्थलों को विकसित करते हुए, विदेशी पर्यटकों को सुगमता प्रदान करने का लगातार प्रयास किया जा रहा है। नालंदा विश्वविद्यालय को पुनर्जीवित करने का प्रयास सराहनीय कदमों में से एक है, जो बौद्ध शिक्षाओं का केंद्र रहा है। आज पुनः इस प्राचीन विश्वविद्यालय को स्थापित करके विदेशी विद्यार्थियों को आकर्षित किया जा रहा है, जिससे इस विश्वविद्यालय की वैश्विक सर्वोच्चता को पुनः स्थापित किया जा सके। और पुनः यह स्थान बौद्ध शिक्षा का केंद्र बन सके। जो भारत को विश्व पटल पर विश्वगुरु के रूप में उभारने का एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रयास है। जो भारत की सॉफ्ट पॉवर को विकसित करने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका अदा कर रहा है।

भारत की संस्कृति सदैव से अक्षुण्ण रही है और इसकी जड़ें प्राचीन काल से ही भारतीय समाज का हिस्सा रही हैं। चीन द्वारा बौद्ध धर्म को अपने शक्ति नियंत्रण में लेकर भारत की सॉफ्ट कूटनीति को जो चुनौती दी जा रही है, उससे निपटने में भारत पूरी तरह सक्षम है। भारत पूर्वी एशियाई देशों में बौद्ध धर्म का मुखिया रहा है। अगर एक प्रकार से देखा जाए तो भारत और पूर्वी एशियाई देशों का बौद्ध धर्म को लेकर गुरु और शिष्य का संबंध है। आज भी बौद्ध भिक्षु दूर देशों से बौद्ध की शिक्षाओं का अनुसरण करने और सीखने भारत आते हैं। जो भारत की सर्वोच्चता को दर्शाता है। हालांकि भारत ने कभी खुद को इस रूप में प्रदर्शित नहीं किया है। किंतु आज चीन के इस क्षेत्र में बढ़ते हुए प्रभाव से निपटने के लिए भारतीय रणनीति में भी व्यापक परिवर्तन देखने को मिल रहा है। आज भारतीय सरकार 'एक भारत, श्रेष्ठ भारत' के विचार को आगे लेकर बढ़

रही है। कंबोडिया में आज भी हिंदू संस्कृति की स्वीकार्यता स्थापित है। भारत की 'पूर्व की ओर देखो नीति' को बदलकर 'पूर्व की ओर कार्य करें' नीति के अंतर्गत भी बौद्ध धर्म एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रहा है। साथ ही साथ इस क्षेत्र में अभी भी व्यापक संभावनाएं व्याप्त हैं। भारत के प्रथम प्रधानमंत्री जवाहरलाल नेहरू की अध्यक्षता में 1952 में भारत ने अंतर्राष्ट्रीय बौद्ध सम्मेलन का सांची में संचालन किया। जो तत्कालीन समय में सबसे बड़ा बौद्ध सम्मेलन था। इसी क्रम में 2011 में महात्मा बुद्ध के ज्ञानोदीप्त के 2600 वीं वर्षगांठ पर भारत द्वारा वैश्विक बौद्ध सम्मेलन का आयोजन किया गया। (किश्वर, 2023) जिसमें दलाई लामा की उपस्थिति का व्यापक विरोध चीन द्वारा किया गया। दलाई लामा की भारत में उपस्थिति भी बौद्ध धर्म की स्थिति को भारत में मजबूत करती है, जिसमें चीन सदैव अपना विरोध दर्ज कराता रहता है। क्योंकि दलाई लामा की भारत में उपस्थिति बौद्ध धर्म के पक्ष में चीन की स्थिति को कमजोर करती है। बौद्ध भिक्षुओं में यह मान्यता है कि भारतीय 'तवांग' क्षेत्र में अगले दलाई लामा का जन्म होगा। जो चीन के द्वारा अस्वीकार किया जाता रहा है।

बौद्ध धर्म भारतीय सॉफ्ट कूटनीति में महत्वपूर्ण स्थान रखता है, क्योंकि द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध के उपरांत विश्व शांति को देशों ने महत्व दिया है। भारतीय विदेश नीति में 'पंचशील' भी बौद्ध शिक्षाओं से प्रभावित रहा है। वर्तमान मोदी सरकार ने भारतीय विदेश नीति में 'पंचामृत' को महत्वपूर्ण स्थान दिया है। जिसमें से भारतीय विदेश नीति के लिए पांचवां अमृत 'संस्कृति और सभ्यता' को रखा गया है। जो वर्तमान सरकार की संस्कृति के प्रति सकारात्मक सोच को विश्व पटल पर भारत को लाभान्वित करने के लिए प्रयोग किए जाने से भी संबंधित है। जिसमें बौद्ध धर्म चीन की प्रतिद्वंद्विता से निपटने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रहा है। बौद्ध धर्म की व्यापक एशियाई क्षेत्र में पहुंच और शांतिप्रिय धर्म के रूप में पहचान के साथ इसकी अहिंसक साधनों के प्रति आस्था इसको सॉफ्ट पावर कूटनीति में आदर्श स्थिति प्रदान करती है। इस वजह से भारतीय सरकार बौद्ध तीर्थस्थलों का विकास देशों के साथ कूटनीतिक, आर्थिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं रणनीतिक भागीदारी को ध्यान में रखकर कर रही है। वहीं दूसरी तरफ चीन ने बदलते वैश्विक वातावरण को ध्यान में रखते हुए महाद्वीप में धर्म की कूटनीतिक महत्ता को समझकर अपनी महाद्वीप सॉफ्ट पावर रणनीति में धर्म को शामिल किया है। चीन बौद्ध धर्म के ऐतिहासिक उपस्थिति को मान्यता देते हुए यह तर्क देता है कि वह दुनिया में सबसे

ज्यादा बौद्ध जनसंख्या वाला देश है। इस लिहाज से भी वह बौद्ध धर्म कर विश्वास रखने वालों का मुखिया है। चीन एशिया में आर्थिक एवं सैन्य रूप से सर्वाधिक शक्तिशाली राष्ट्र है और अब यह विश्व पटल पर अपनी धार्मिक सर्वोच्चता के माध्यम से स्वयं के हितों को साधने का प्रयास कर रहा है। जिसकी राह में सबसे बड़ी अड़चन भारत ही है। दोनों देशों के मध्य बौद्ध कूटनीति के संदर्भ में सबसे बड़ी प्रतिस्पर्धा की वजह दलाई लामा को लेकर है। जो भारत में शरण लिए हुए हैं। जिन्हें चीन के द्वारा वापस सौंपने के लिए भारत सरकार से लगातार कहा जाता रहा है, क्योंकि यह चीनी संप्रभुता के लिए एक बड़ी चुनौती प्रदर्शित करता है। भारत इस स्थिति में ज्यादा मजबूत दिखता है। बौद्ध प्राचीन 8 स्थानों में से 7 स्थान भारत में स्थित हैं, जो भारत की पर्यटन कूटनीति को मजबूत करते हैं। किंतु यह वैश्विक बौद्ध पर्यटकों का केवल 1 प्रतिशत हिस्से को ही अपनी ओर आकर्षित कर पा रहे हैं। जो भारत के लिए एक चुनौती है। अधिकांश बौद्ध पर्यटन दक्षिण पूर्वी एशियाई देशों की ओर ज्यादा आकर्षित होते हैं। जो अब चीन के लिए एक अवसर पैदा कर रहा है। पर्यटन को बेहतर व्यवस्थाओं का विकास इस क्षेत्र में पर्यटन की अर्थव्यवस्था को बढ़ाने के साथ ही साथ भारत की सांस्कृतिक कूटनीति को मजबूत करने में भी योगदान देने की क्षमता रखता है।

निष्कर्षतः हम यह कह सकते हैं कि बौद्ध धर्म की शिक्षाएं शांति एवं अहिंसा पर विश्वास रखते हुए समस्त मानव समुदाय के कल्याण पर बल देती हैं। इन शिक्षाओं के द्वारा वर्तमान विश्व में चल रहे संघर्षों को हल करने का प्रयास किया जा सकता है। आज सॉफ्ट पावर डिप्लोमेसी का योगदान वैश्विक व्यवस्था में बढ़ा है। भारत अपनी नीतियों के द्वारा चीन की सर्वोच्चता को सॉफ्ट पावर कूटनीति के द्वारा चुनौती देने में सर्वाधिक सक्षम है। चीन जिस प्रकार से तेजी से बौद्ध धर्म के माध्यम से विश्व बौद्ध भिक्षुओं को अपनी ओर आकर्षित करने का प्रयास कर रहा है वह उसकी विदेश नीति का प्रमुख हिस्सा है। जिसे भारत से चुनौती मिल रही है। वर्तमान भारतीय सरकार द्वारा भारतीय संस्कृति में विद्यमान क्षमताओं को सही दिशा में कार्यान्वित करके अपनी विदेश नीति को पुष्ट करने का सराहनीय प्रयास किया जा रहा है। साथ ही अभी भी बौद्ध धर्म में व्याप्त क्षमताओं एवं संभावनाओं को पूरी तरह से कार्यान्वित करना बाकी है। भारत आज योग एवं सांस्कृतिक समृद्धता के माध्यम से विश्व में अपनी पहचान को मजबूत करने के साथ ही साथ अन्य देशों को भी स्वयं से प्रभावित कर रहा है। जो भारत को

विश्वगुरु बनने की राह में मदद करने के साथ ही साथ भारत की 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' की धारणा को भी सार्थक कर रहा है।

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TOURISM DIPLOMACY IN INDIA

Dr. Sheereen Saleem and Dr. Firoj Ahamad***

Abstract

This abstract discusses the concept of tourism diplomacy in India, highlighting the potential for leveraging the country's rich tourism resources for fostering global engagement and understanding. It provides a historical overview of tourism in India, from ancient times to post-independence, and explores the role of tourism in diplomacy. The study also examines the governmental organizations and policies relating to tourism, bilateral and multilateral agreements, and the challenges and opportunities in tourism diplomacy. It further delves into the promotion of tourism and soft power, sustainable tourism practices, and shares case studies and success stories from India's tourism diplomacy, including the 'Incredible India' campaign. The abstract concludes with insights into security concerns and the tremendous potential for tourism diplomacy to enhance India's global appeal and soft power.

Keywords: Tourism diplomacy, Cultural Diplomacy, Soft Power, Eco-Tourism, Sustainable Tourism.

Understanding Tourism Diplomacy

India's vast tourism potential could be leveraged for building 'people to people contacts' for long term co-operation and mutual understanding among Nations. The innumerable commonalities among Indian tourism products and those of neighboring countries could emerge as a strong binding tie in enhancing cultural diplomatic relationships in the region and make South Asia one of the global tourism destinations. This discussion highlights the use of tourism as an instrument of state policy and a tool of diplomacy in the emerging phenomenon of 'tourism diplomacy' with modelling of Indian tourism diplomacy

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perspective. India's tourism diplomacy could be addressed to promote economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and fat-moving diplomacy, and enhance destination marketing (Dash & Sharma et al.2021) .

After making an exploratory inquiry of Indian tourism diplomacy, the discussion signifies the need of sowing the seeds of tourism diplomacy at intending level, multi-level articulation at national level, and co-ordination between tourism and diplomatic efforts. In the emerging globalized economy, the pervading changes in all walks of life are collectively termed as 'Globalisation', the term has broad meanings contextually. In the context of tourism, globalisation has given rise to 'tourism as an agent of development', where tourism is seen as a great economic driving force for growth and development of Nations. This development model premised on tourism as a leverage tool goes beyond economics into all areas of social development and change.

Definition and Concept

Currently, nations around the globe are vying for tourism to promote economic, cultural and social interactions, encouraging travel to their specific regions through the formulation and implementation of tourism developmental policies, and are trying hard to promote themselves as a brand for tourism. Some countries have resorted to sophisticated public relations endeavor's, laboring hard to project a specific image of themselves. Further, this predisposition had led to the emergence of an industry the size of which presently is at least 344 billion euro or approximately US dollars 445 billion. Globally, tourism industry supports more than 12 percent of all jobs. Many believe tourism to be the largest global industry with socio-economic benefits. In this context, with its rich spread of cultural and natural diversity, tourism rightly poses India's prime wealth-creating industry with greatest potentiality to provide employment, eradicate poverty and generate revenue. India during the last decade became one of the fastest-growing tourism economies in the world. India expects to have tourist's inflow over 10 million annually generating foreign exchange of US dollars 25 billion. India has taken steps to evolve a strategy to boost the market share of foreign tourist arrivals, enhance employment generation in the tourism sector, simplify regulations and delineate roles of various tourism departments. India's most important tourism

assets are its unique and varied cultural heritage and social kaleidoscope present in diverse forms in diverse places. This must be planned to capture tourism's pie in the global market, with a view to make it an instrument of sustainable development and for the welfare of the local communities. Tourists' visits to places where there is a great accumulation of buildings and artefacts from the past are a self-evident phenomenon, and this predilection is not a modern one. Every civilization has been beguiled by the concept of the past—the glories gone by (Godara et al.2020).

In essence, the phenomenon of tourism is embedded in the ruins of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and even in the more literate sections of the Aegean and Indus Valley civilizations. While the marvels of pyramids, palaces, cathedrals and temples attested to the greatness of the respective monarchs, such interest inevitably extended to the less palatial construction—forts, dams, step wells and water reservoirs. Ultimately, these edifices were constructed at a great cost not only in terms of mates-labour and money, but equally in pain and joy, passions and aspirations; the charters reflecting a people's past. However, much before this, the mere deep-rootedness of the old, held by the universal consciousness as all that transcends the immediate present became a fertile grounds-planting by poets, artists and savants; a tenacious quest leading intellectuals and romantics through India, Greece, Persia, Rome, Egypt etc. The monuments of men continued to survive as a means of recreation, reflection and an occasion for remembrance. Thus, in one way or the other, the love for travel and place thus visited may be traced in all sections of the society, attesting to the integrity of both the venerated past and present.

Historical Overview of Tourism in India

Tourism has become a key economic driver globally, particularly in developing nations, given its significant contribution to employment, growth, and foreign exchange earnings. The burgeoning Indian tourism sector continues to rise steadily, significantly benefiting the Indian economy. Recognized as one of the 20 emerging countries in 1991 by the United Nations World Tourism Organization, India ranks 36th in the world in 2017, tourism globally. India's tourism industry contributed 7.7% of India's GDP and 42.67 million jobs in India. Between 2016-2027, tourism in India is expected to grow significantly (Mahler et al., 2022).

Historical Overview of Tourism in India presents an in-depth analysis of the evolution of tourism in India, beginning with early historical references. Residences of the Harappan civilization (3200 BC), established at the confluence of rivers, attracted people. Public bathing was common to maintain hygiene as the Indus Valley people lived in brick houses and wells, making it necessary for common people to bathe in the river rather than in costly wells. In early days, the most important and attractive river for bathing was the Ganges, primarily due to the prevalence of the river. Tourism in a broad sense existed prior to the early 16th century. The earliest group of domestic travelers in India was devotees and pilgrims. Jain and Buddhist monks and followers traveled widely. Buddhist sculpture, gospel, and art spread through the countries, promoting tourism. Parsa para, pilgrims, settlers, traders, and monks established elements of tourism.

Pre-Independence Era

In ancient times, India was an attractive point for tourists. Sea cruise was a popular way of transport in those days. Maldives and Mauricius were then called 'Malahar' or 'Malhar' and 'Mahalakshmi' during the time of the Maurya dynasty, and later Chaulukyas, who were called 'Mahalakshmi Dham' or 'Valouh' as renowned tourist ports. Charaka and Susruta, the founders of Indian medicine were called the first medical tourist physicians. The ashtaseshvara lingas installed in eight different places in Gujarat were believed to have been created by a single artist. The Mahabharata was a tourist guide for the Kuru princes, who visited each of the sacred places mentioned in it, which stretched from Gujarat in the West to Himalaya, Indus, and further away (Peručić et al.2020).

The foreign tourist arrivals were 16,592 in 1947, which increased to 329,376 in 1960. The tourist arrivals from Europe were the highest at 13,326 or 80.3 percent, which necessitated the establishment of the Ministry of Tourism on 1st March, 1967 to promote tourism. The government policies put up blocks for the growth of tourism. However, the tourism sector has gained momentum since liberalisation in the early 1990s and has been considered the second engine of economic growth.

Post-Independence Development

Building upon the historical foundations laid out in the previous section, the following discusses the post-independence development of tourism in India, highlighting the key shifts, developments, and policies that have influenced the industry. At the outset, it broadly addresses the state tourism policies across various five-year plans and articulates key milestones and agencies addressing Indian tourism at the grassroots. It also describes The Incredible India concept, highlighting the key elements of the campaign. The section concludes focusing on the important landmarks in Indian tourism development and articulates the significance of understanding this evolution of Indian tourism over time (Amore & Roy et al.2020).

Though India gained independence in 1947, the Varma Committee constituted with the task of examining the problem and hardships felt by, pilgrims in the country was appointed prior to independence. With its recommendations implemented by the then state governments, attention also started being diverted towards development tourism in states, with the appointment of state level Tourism Committees. Gradually, attention was diverted towards development of tourism by the Centre and thereafter gradual widespread developments took place. The sectional addresses such developments, covering key socio, political, and economic shifts influencing tourism in the country after independence. The major landmarks in Indian tourism development between the mid-1940s (post-independence period) and the fall of the perceived ‘age of innocence’ towards liberalization in the early 1990s are identified and articulated – as it needs to be understood in order to appreciate the subsequent developments in Indian tourism post liberalization. Thus, many a land mark in the development of tourism in India post-independence, distinguished by various autonomous agencies being formed making way for a plethora of tourism policies, plans and projects at national, state and district levels, is presented (Varma et al.2021).

The Role of Tourism in Diplomacy

Tourism and diplomacy are two complex social phenomena that are inextricably intertwined. Humans have had an innate drive to shift their habitat

ever since they first stepped foot on earth, which has led to humans moving away from their birthplace. This social behavior of man has taken a lot of forms and shapes over a period of time. Tourism has been formally approached by some international organizations such as the United Nations, Tourism International Organization, World Bank, etc. and has been defined in various ways. However, there is no universally accepted single definition of tourism as it is a dynamic concept and has different connotations in different cultures and countries (Herrero et al.2022).

Tourism refers to the business of providing information, accommodation, transport, and other services to people visiting a place for pleasure. Diplomacy comes from the Greek word “diploma” and refers to a passport or important document issued by the State or a gift on the successful completion of a task. Diplomacy is a term describing the international relations of sovereign states, though it is sometimes used in a wider sense. In its broader meaning, diplomacy includes representation, negotiation, protection, and promotion of interests, spending, and other activities conducted by countries at international, governmental, and intergovernmental levels. Diplomacy in its narrower sense usually refers to a negotiating process conducted by officials of foreign ministries and diplomatic missions. Tourism is not a pre-planned action rather an incident which is the manifestation of certain socio-economic parameters and development in the society. However, the second phase of modern tourism is attributed to those activities which have socio-political background. The modern mass tourism is therefore a by-product of war and fought by nations in their pursuit for ‘peace’ through mutual understanding, cultural exchanges, goodwill, and habit of cooperation. The sponsoring nations in this regard played a ‘noble role’ while the tourist countries were ‘innocent victims’ (Bennett et al.2020).

Cultural Diplomacy Through Tourism

Various systemic inquiries focus on the political and economic dimensions of tourism diplomacy. Uche (2018) in this regard investigates the politics of tourism development in Africa’s international relations with expansive focus on Africa’s dealings with East-Asia and the Arab World, but more especially China and Middle-East, for development assistance through tourism. Along similar lines, Saari (2019) elaborates on the epistemic policy networks of

tourism diplomacy from the perspective of small and innovative states focusing on Finland and its biometric technology innovation promoting tourism to Meso-American nations. Fojo (2019) investigates nation branding in Portugal through the case of World Surfing Reserves. Although these inquiries combined are able to furnish a systemic understanding into how nation-states use tourism for political and economic ends, the cultural dimensions of tourism diplomacy are largely ignored. This paper informing how tourism in the present spatial exceptionalism becomes a cultural means for diplomacy amongst nation-states. The focus is thus centred on how tourism as a cultural means serves blurring thunder of exchanges amongst the tradition, values, and heritage of countries under the purview of tourism diplomacy across the globe. By doing so it provides a missing and valuable perspective on the cultural subjection of tourism diplomacy. Additionally, focusing on tourism popularly termed experiential economy with its consequent participation by agents and marketplaces for interdependent impacts, this section furthers the understanding of the twenty first century revisit to cultural diplomacy taken by nation-states (Seyfi et al., 2022 and Prantl & Goh et al.2022).

Governmental Organizations and Policies

This section examines the governmental organizations and policies relating to tourism in India. Some main aspects with details are presented below. The central ministry is the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) that formulates policies for the development and promotion of tourism in the country. In 1958, the erstwhile Department of Tourism was elevated to the status of a full-fledged ministry. With the growth of tourism, the department was bifurcated into two departments - one for development of tourism and the other for promotion of tourism. Later, in 2004, these two departments were merged into one Tourism Department with two wings; the planning finance and administration wing, and the tourist promotion and socio-re-economic wing. Though there are different policies formulated, there is no specific policy for Buddhist tourism. Unlike other ministries and services, the Buddhist tourist destinations and tourists are the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism. Decisions regarding these issues are taken in the Central Government and all the funds allocated through the Ministry of finance are either spent or controlled by the Ministry of Tourism.

As Buddhism is a living religion and followed by many countries, central government decides to invite foreign delegates for seminars, conferences, etc., arrange buses and train journeys to Indian Buddhist shrines, guide and conduct them with the help of trained personnel (Shinde et al. 2021 and 2022).

Tourism is a priority area of economic and social development with a view to enhancing productivity and attracting investment in tourism industry, the new tourism policy was adopted in 2004. Development of tourism infrastructure has been made compulsory under the provisions of public interest under which projects adhered to the tourism policy and complying the instruction or rules prescribed by the tourism and local authorities will not be subject too further scrutiny under laws of state. Under this policy, the tourism development authorities will be established at state, district, and panchayat level to oversee the tourism projects. With an aim of protecting archaeological properties and preserving cultural heritage, Architectural Survey of India (ASI), an apex body of the Union Government was formed under the Ancient Monument and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958. Efforts are made to design policies and plans that are socially equitable, economically viable, environmentally friendly, and sustainable.

Ministry of Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism is the nodal agency of the Government of India, responsible for formulating and implementing policies for the development and promotion of tourism. The subject of tourism was included in the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India in 1986, and tourism was declared as an industry in 1988, giving tourism more importance than before. For the formulation of a proper tourism policy, the National Committee on Tourism under the chairmanship of K. Satyamurthy recommended a comprehensive approach to the development of the tourism sector in the country. A full-fledged Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation was constituted in May 1987, which was bifurcated in 1995 into the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Civil Aviation. The Ministry of Tourism is responsible for the implementation of the “Incredible India” campaign aimed at promoting India as a tourist destination (Elliott et al.2020).

Over the years, the Ministry of Tourism has adopted various strategies and initiatives to promote tourism in India. These include financial assistance for infrastructure development, capacity building and skill development of various service providers to cater to the tourism industry, and research and surveys for policy formulation. The Ministry of Tourism has been implementing the Swadesh Darshan Scheme since 2014 to develop theme-based tourist circuits. The Ministry of Tourism has also been implementing the PRASAD scheme, which provides assistance for the development of infrastructure facilities for pilgrimage tourism. The Ministry of Tourism has been providing financial assistance for the promotion and publicity of tourism products in India through events like fairs, exhibitions, and film festivals.

Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements

The Indian government has entered into bilateral and multilateral agreements to enhance cooperation in tourism with various countries. This framework facilitates the implementation of cooperation through specific projects and contributes towards the promotion of tourism in India. Bilateral agreements have been signed with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Mauritius, Nepal, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the Maldives. Efforts are on to identify new areas of collaboration in the tourism sector, including the exchange of information, publicity, and participation at various fairs and exhibitions (Baruah et al.2022).

Multilateral agreements have been signed with 5 countries from the SAARC region. The first meeting of the Working Group on SAARC Food Safety Network was held at New Delhi on September 13-14, 2006 with the participation of food safety experts from the SAARC member states. The final report of the working group was adopted by the SAARC minister at Bhaktapur, Nepal on January 4, 2007. Subsequently cooperation agreements were formalized with Maldives on April 20, 2005; Bhutan on March 31, 2006; and Sri Lanka on September 27, 2006. Meetings of SAARC Food Safety Network were subsequently held at Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. The first meeting of the Working Group on Biological Diversity was held at New Delhi on November 1-3, 2006. This was attended by experts from member states. The report of the working group was considered by senior environment officials at Agra on February 27-28, 2008, and was subsequently adopted by

the SAARC minister at Colombo on August 2, 2008 (Bishwakarma & Hu et al.2022).

Bilateral Tourism Agreements

Focusing on the specific domain of bilateral agreements, this subsection explores the nuanced dimensions of tourism diplomacy within the context of specific bilateral agreements involving India. Three different bilateral tourism agreements of India with other countries are presented here, considering the various dimensions. India-Sweden Bilateral Tourism Agreement (2006) focuses on cooperation, exchange of information and expertise, and the planning and implementation of mutually beneficial marketing and promotional activities.

India's Tourism Diplomacy with Sweden: The government of the Republic of India and the government of the Kingdom of Sweden have signed a protocol on tourism cooperation. This agreement aims to strengthen cooperation and mutually beneficial exchanges in the field of tourism. It focuses on the exchange of information and expertise, regular meetings between competition authorities, and the planning and implementation of mutually beneficial marketing and promotional activities, including jointly organized workshop programs. The establishments of official tourist offices in both countries are encouraged (Grech et al.2020).

The two Governments welcome the cooperation between Indian and Swedish associations and the planning of cooperative tourism market research studies to help different stakeholders in travelling and tourism. This agreement also states that arrivals of both countries in each other's country would be encouraged through the promotion of group tours by travel agents recognized by the respective Governments. They also agree to promote cooperation in the field of Education and Human Resource Development, particularly in Risk Analysis, and in the training of tourism professionals. For the implementation of the agreement, an implementation procedure is set up, which provides for the exchange of visits of small delegations to encourage and promote tourism between the two countries through arrangements for the establishment of direct air links with India and Sweden.

Promotion of Tourism and Soft Power

One of the ways a nation exercises soft power is through its tourism. National tourism marketing can greatly contribute to a favorable perception of the nation abroad. This, in turn, can enhance the nation's soft power. Since the last decade, there have been major efforts to promote India as a tourism destination as a part of enhancing India's image. The "Incredible India" campaign launched in 2002 is a case in point. In the past few years, the assessment of this campaign's impact has provided important insight into the role of tourism in either enhancing/hindering the national image abroad (Sharma et al.2022).

Today's tourists from around the world flock to India to admire its architectural wonders, enjoy its beautiful beaches, engage in adventure sports and thrill to wildlife, experience yoga and Ayurveda – health/meditation for a healthy body/mind, visit varied fairs, festivals, and folk art, and explore its multicultural fabric. Travellers also take back fond memories of the warm hospitality and friendliness of the Indian people. People-focused tourism and services have also kept India in the forefront of medical tourism. These factors contribute greatly to the image of India: 'the Land of Spirituality and Philosophy.' This positive image has been harnessed further to focus on assertive development initiatives.

Marketing Strategies

Even as it conforms to dominant representations and desires in the Western construction of 'the East', India's narrative resonates with the anxieties and aspirations of other similar post-colonial nations. India is crafted with an image that is curiously homogenising, essentialising, and binary - it juxtaposes the hiking, travelling, enjoying middle-class Europeans/whites and the dark-complexioned, sensual people/elements of India. The narrative of India's tourism is not only about the grandeur of its monuments, sites, cultures, and truths, or the beauty and value of its natural elements but about how they serve, gratify, and accommodate desires, goals, and interests. Further, India's marketing of tourism does not convince individuals to travel to India but turns them into spirits that desire and dream of India and its offerings. It further polarises the 'naive tourists' who believe in the imagery of the tourism industry

and uses their 'mis-readings' to create other images such as a 'country of snake charmers', 'mystic country', 'exotica', etc (Singh et al.2021).

Sustainable Tourism Practices

Sustainable tourism is ethically concerned with the need for tourism to take place within the earth's ecological capacity. It is viewed as a guideline for tourism development and management that comprehensively addresses the whole of the tourism process. Sustainability cannot only be measured by the 'environmental sustainability' dimension, which encompasses vital issues such as 'global warming', 'bio-diversity loss', and 'destruction of the ozone layer' as these are the very global issues the sustainability issue seeks to address. On the other hand, the question of ethical sustainability seeks to address the moral perspective; the basic question is whether tourism development is ethically acceptable, fair, and just for both the host society and the tourist, i.e., it focuses on the right and wrong aspects of tourism development (Garg & Pandey et al. 2021, Mathew et al.2022, Koščak & O'Rourke et al.2023).

Few countries possess the wealth of history and cultural legacy that India possesses. The pyramids, Rome, and the Taj Mahal can take a tourist back in time to one of the great cultures that existed many thousands of years ago. They can wander among ruined palaces and temples, tread the pavement worn smooth by many feet, gaze in wonder at the great skills of craftsmen and artists long since dead, and witness the hopes and aspirations captured in stone on a grand scale. India is a country of masses and of many more tourists. This expectation is based on its hospitality. That is why India is perhaps the best tourist destination in the world. India possesses a rich variety of natural resources such as sandy beaches, lush green hill stations, desert sands, snow-capped mountains, fertile lands, etc.

Eco-Tourism

Eco-tourism is a quickly expanding sector of the tourism industry that is committed to being eco-friendly. It's distinguished from tourism by its unique practices and emphasis on eco-friendly initiatives and actions. Eco-tourism does include government initiatives, but a significant amount of development is rooted in civil society's reactions to failed sustainable development models.

The term eco-tourism broadly encompasses two categories of initiatives (Sharma and Sarmah et al. 2021).

The first category includes initiatives that specifically target the favelas with the aim of bringing increased investment and consumption to Brazil's poorest communities. Examples include a public-private partnership by the Brazilian government and private business to develop several favela areas into tourist and entertainment zones. The second category includes eco-friendly initiatives that do not target the favelas and instead focus on Brazil's natural ecosystems, with an emphasis on the preservation of these ecosystems with a guarantee of benefits for local populations. Many of Brazil's natural parks were established during the early twentieth century. Indigenous populations were generally banned from these areas, creating tensions and protests that continue till this day (Garrett et al. 2021).

In the case of India, the term eco-tourism is often used to criticize other forms of tourism (e.g., mass tourism, pilgrimage tourism) as well as tourism development generally. Environmental groups frequently use the concept of eco-tourism in their resistance to the state's development plans. Beginning in the 1990s, after damage done to the temples surrounding the nature parks of Ranthambore and Sariska, eco-tourism was promoted in the country as a mechanism to mitigate the overgrazing of parks by surrounding populations. Based on these initial concerns, eco-tourism development has been promoted in the country's many nature parks in order to generate additional income, reduce poverty levels, fund the anti-poaching unit, and promote economic development. Clearly, in these examples, eco-tourism is framed as a Local Benefit-System.

Challenges and Opportunities in Tourism Diplomacy

The tourism diplomacy narrative is a multi-faceted approach that encompasses a broad spectrum of interlinked processes. It presents a more informative understanding of tourism diplomacy rather than a fixed diplomatic paradigm envisaged in a broader development and foreign policy strategy, which may underpin other emerging concepts in the disciplinary development discourse. It is also worth mentioning that by comparison, tourism diplomacy could further be unpacked into performance-driven aspects, offering greater

explanation to delineate its challenges and opportunities in the Indian context. The lessons drawn from the process-trend perspective might also be similar to other rapidly developing economies with robust tourism footprints and aspirations on a broader diplomatic canvas (Yousaf et al. 2021).

The archival and interpretative approach based on in-depth secondary sources does impose its own limitations in terms of in-depth personal interviews or focus-group discussions to grasp the migrants' experiences more holistically. Nonetheless, such a broad-spectrum understanding does hold genuinely relevant outcomes on various aspects of tourism diplomacy in general, while focusing on the Indian contours relative to its peer nations, which could provide a significant groundwork for further studies on the evolving macro-discourse on tourism diplomacy.

Security Concerns

Focusing on the specific dimension of security concerns, the challenges and considerations pertaining to ensuring the safety and security of tourists are addressed. Tourist safety and security is a major concern for tourist destinations. Ensuring a safe and secure environment for tourists and protecting their rights is vital. Damage to tourists' health, safety, and property will ruin the reputation of a destination in international tourism. Destination management bodies in most countries are becoming increasingly aware of the need to take conscious actions to ensure the safety, health, and security of tourists.

During the last few decades, tourism has undergone tremendous changes, which have implications for travel safety and security. Travel safety refers to the degree to which people feel secure while traveling. It encompasses personal safety, transportation safety, health safety, and various other aspects. While health safety is mainly concerned with accidents of a medical nature, personal safety pertains to accidents of a criminal nature, including threats to life and property. Many healthy cities worldwide have illusions about health safety.

Case Studies and Success Stories

The emergence of new players in international tourism has compelled destinations to take to marketing their incentive offerings and gathering the expected benefits of the results. In other words, tourism diplomacy is about the promotion of tourist interests abroad in key potential markets through the foreign missions of a country (wherever applicable), foreign diplomats based locally, foreign-related dignitaries visiting the countries, fairs, exhibitions, conferences, foreign exposure visits, and promotional campaigns. It can also encompass the compilation of databases and information on relevant countries related to tourists and the sale of the destination packages to the tourist's industry abroad. In essence, building the image of the destinations, creating interest about them, and inspiring people to visit the destinations internationally is tourism diplomacy (Xu et al. 2020).

Like other players, countries are not only focused on attracting higher foreign inbound arrivals of tourists but also on developing new generating markets. Missed due attention to these markets may result in a loss of a big opportunity. Tourism diplomacy can also prospectively prove beneficial in attracting a foreign institutional setup for investment in rejuvenating and revitalizing the travel and tourism trade industry, which has been informed about developmental provisions for tourism incentivizing. In fact, countries, irrespective of their size and status, have resorted to it. All major tourist places have their foreign missions stationed, endorsed by the need of a bonus intervention. Under such a scenario, it becomes obligatory for destinations, conspicuously a developing one, to take the lead in promoting works and yielding benefits. This is especially important for newer destinations with an endowed comparative advantage in tourism such as cities or states. Events like the upcoming first SAARC Youth Carnival in Sikkim, attended by delegations from SAARC member nations, which is an occasion for home promotion would then be missed (Minardi et al. 2021).

Incredible India Campaign

Focusing on the unique 'Incredible India' Campaign, which marked the first of its kind effort by India to promote itself as a tourism destination abroad, this

success story in India's tourism diplomacy is described. The details of the campaign, including its objectives, promotional strategies, evolution and implementation, strengths and shortcomings, and the impact on India's image abroad, are encapsulated. The ongoing challenges faced by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in sustaining the impact of the 'Incredible India' campaign are also included. The outreach of promotional strategies and their impact on winning the hearts of foreign tourists across the globe may enhance India's attractiveness as a tourism destination and may result in augmenting India's soft power and exclusive diplomacy. It may further augment India's global appeal as a nation in the domains of tourism, foreign direct investment, and migration, and thereby facilitate newer and larger undertakings in global governance and sustainable development (Nair et al. 2021).

Conclusion

The preliminary analysis indicates the momentum generated by this campaign in bolstering India's attractiveness as a tourism destination abroad, enhancing India's global image, and positioning it as a destination of choice for foreign tourists. It has significantly bolstered India's appeal by succeeding in branding India as 'Incredible.' The accuracy of the brand assertion lies in the diversity and profundity of India's cultural heritage, landscapes, places of pilgrimage, knowledge systems, and its original lifestyle that sustains the planet and human life. The promotion of 'Incredible India' weaving in the relevant cultural elements has made the outreach strategies successful. Within two years of the launch of the campaign, India's Foreign Tourist Arrival has shown a substantial rise of 25 percent, as such increase was only 11.2 percent in the period just prior to the launch (Jaipuria et al., 2021 and Khan et al. 2020).

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कूटनीति और पर्यटन

डॉ भूपेंद्र कुमार साहू*

सारांश

देश की समृद्ध विरासत और विविध व्यंजनों का लाभ उठाकर भारत के 'सॉफ्ट पावर' को बढ़ाया जा सकता है तथा विदेशी राजस्व को आकर्षित किया जा सकता है। ऐसा कर भारत रोज़गार को बढ़ावा दे सकता है और असंगठित क्षेत्र को आकर्षित कर सकता है। भारत का 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' का दर्शन बहुपक्षवाद का समर्थन करता है और पाक पर्यटन (culinary tourism) इस लोकाचार को प्रदर्शित कर सकता है। हाल की धर्मशाला घोषणा वैश्विक पर्यटन में भारत की संभावना को चिह्नित करता है और घरेलू पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देता है।

पर्यटन और वैश्वीकरण परस्पर जुड़ी हुई घटनाएँ हैं जो हाल के दशकों में काफी विकसित हुई हैं। वैश्वीकरण का तात्पर्य प्रौद्योगिकी, संचार, परिवहन और व्यापार में प्रगति के कारण देशों और संस्कृतियों के बीच बढ़ती हुई परस्पर संबद्धता और अन्योन्याश्रयता से है। दूसरी ओर, पर्यटन में अवकाश, मनोरंजन, व्यवसाय या अन्य उद्देश्यों के लिए लोगों का एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान पर जाना शामिल है। जबकि वैश्वीकरण ने पर्यटन उद्योग के विकास को सुगम बनाया है, पर्यटन ने बदले में, दुनिया भर में लोगों, संस्कृतियों और अर्थव्यवस्थाओं को जोड़कर वैश्वीकरण के प्रसार में योगदान दिया है। हालाँकि, स्थानीय संस्कृतियों, पर्यावरण और समुदायों के लिए आर्थिक लाभ और संभावित नकारात्मक परिणामों दोनों पर विचार करते हुए, पर्यटन के प्रभावों को जिम्मेदारी से प्रबंधित करना महत्वपूर्ण है।

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प्रस्तावना

देश की समृद्ध विरासत और विविध व्यंजनों का लाभ उठाकर भारत के 'सॉफ्ट पावर' को बढ़ाया जा सकता है तथा विदेशी राजस्व को आकर्षित किया जा सकता है। ऐसा कर भारत रोज़गार को बढ़ावा दे सकता है और असंगठित क्षेत्र को आकर्षित कर सकता है। भारत का 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' का दर्शन बहुपक्षवाद का समर्थन करता है और पाक पर्यटन (culinary tourism) इस लोकाचार को प्रदर्शित कर सकता है। हाल की धर्मशाला घोषणा वैश्विक पर्यटन में भारत की संभावना को चिह्नित करता है और घरेलू पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देता है।

विश्व पर्यटन संगठन (यूएनडब्ल्यूटीओ) के अनुसार, पर्यटन तेजी से विस्तार करने वाले क्षेत्रों में से एक है, जो दुनिया भर के सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) में 10% से अधिक का महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देता है (यूएनडब्ल्यूटीओ 2017; मिकायिलोव एट अल. 2019)। अंतर्राष्ट्रीय पर्यटकों की संख्या, जो 1950 में 25 मिलियन थी, में पर्याप्त वृद्धि देखी गई, जो 1970 तक 166 मिलियन तक पहुंच गई, और अंततः 2018 में 1.442 बिलियन तक बढ़ गई। अनुमान बताते हैं कि यह आंकड़ा 2030 तक 1.8 बिलियन तक बढ़ने की उम्मीद है। 1980 से, विश्व पर्यटन दिवस हर साल 27 सितंबर को मनाया जाता है। यह तिथि 1970 में संगठन के क़ानूनों की स्वीकृति का स्मरण कराती है, जिसने पाँच साल बाद UNWTO की स्थापना की नींव रखी। 2023 में, UNWTO अधिक और अधिक सटीक निवेश के महत्व पर जोर देता है जो व्यक्तियों और पर्यावरण दोनों को लाभ पहुँचाता है, और समग्र समृद्धि में योगदान देता है। पर्यटन और वैश्वीकरण परस्पर जुड़ी हुई घटनाएँ हैं जो हाल के दशकों में काफी विकसित हुई हैं। वैश्वीकरण का तात्पर्य प्रौद्योगिकी, संचार, परिवहन और व्यापार में प्रगति के कारण देशों और संस्कृतियों के बीच बढ़ती हुई परस्पर संबद्धता और अन्योन्याश्रयता से है। दूसरी ओर, पर्यटन में अवकाश, मनोरंजन, व्यवसाय या अन्य उद्देश्यों के लिए लोगों का एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान पर जाना शामिल है। जबकि वैश्वीकरण ने पर्यटन उद्योग के विकास को सुगम बनाया है, पर्यटन ने बदले में, दुनिया भर में लोगों, संस्कृतियों और अर्थव्यवस्थाओं को जोड़कर वैश्वीकरण के प्रसार में योगदान दिया है। हालाँकि, स्थानीय संस्कृतियों, पर्यावरण और समुदायों के लिए आर्थिक लाभ और संभावित नकारात्मक परिणामों

दोनों पर विचार करते हुए, पर्यटन के प्रभावों को जिम्मेदारी से प्रबंधित करना महत्वपूर्ण है।

पर्यटन का प्रभाव

- सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान और एकीकरण : पर्यटन संस्कृतियों, परंपराओं और विचारों के आदान-प्रदान को प्रोत्साहित करता है, जिससे वैश्विक सांस्कृतिक एकीकरण को बढ़ावा मिलता है। दुनिया भर के लोग यात्रा करते हैं और बातचीत करते हैं, वे सांस्कृतिक प्रथाओं, भाषाओं और व्यंजनों को साझा करते हैं, जिससे अंतर-सांस्कृतिक समझ को बढ़ावा मिलता है।
- आपूर्ति श्रृंखलाओं और व्यापार का वैश्वीकरण: पर्यटन उद्योग आपूर्तिकर्ताओं और सेवा प्रदाताओं के वैश्विक नेटवर्क पर निर्भर करता है, जो आपूर्ति श्रृंखलाओं और व्यापार के वैश्वीकरण को बढ़ाता है। होटल अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर सामान खरीदते हैं, एयरलाइंस वैश्विक स्तर पर काम करती हैं और दूर ऑपरेटर दुनिया भर में सहयोग करते हैं।
- आर्थिक लाभ : पर्यटन एक महत्वपूर्ण वैश्विक उद्योग है जो आर्थिक विकास, रोजगार सृजन और हवाई अड्डों और होटलों जैसे बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास को बढ़ावा देता है। यह आर्थिक परस्पर निर्भरता व्यापार और निवेश को बढ़ावा देकर वैश्वीकरण को बढ़ावा देती है।
- पर्यावरण और सामाजिक प्रभाव : पर्यटन के सकारात्मक और नकारात्मक दोनों तरह के पर्यावरणीय और सामाजिक प्रभाव होते हैं। यह वैश्विक स्तर पर सतत पर्यटन और पर्यावरण और सांस्कृतिक संरक्षण के प्रति जागरूकता को बढ़ावा दे सकता है। हालाँकि, यह अति-पर्यटन, पर्यावरण क्षरण और सांस्कृतिक वस्तुकरण को भी जन्म दे सकता है, जिसके लिए अंतराष्ट्रीय सहयोग और समाधान की आवश्यकता होती है।
- सांस्कृतिक समरूपीकरण : जबकि कुछ लोग तर्क देते हैं कि पर्यटन संगीत, फैशन, फिल्में और भोजन जैसे मीडिया के माध्यम से पश्चिमी आदर्शों को फैलाता है, जो संभावित रूप से संस्कृतियों को समरूप बनाता है, यह इन मूल्यों को प्रसारित करने का एकमात्र साधन नहीं है।

भारत में पर्यटन का महत्व

- विदेशी मुद्रा: पर्यटन क्षेत्र भारत के तीसरे सबसे बड़े मुद्रा अर्जक के रूप में भुगतान संतुलन (balance of payments) में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाता है।

उदाहरण के लिये, आगरा में ताजमहल देखने के लिये अंतर्राष्ट्रीय पर्यटकों की आमद, जिससे बड़ी मात्रा में विदेशी मुद्रा राजस्व उत्पन्न होता है।

- गुणक प्रभाव: पर्यटन का अन्य क्षेत्रों, जैसे खाद्य एवं खानपान, होटल एवं रेस्तरां, रियल एस्टेट और परिवहन पर भी सकारात्मक 'स्पिलओवर इफ़ेक्ट' पड़ता है।

उदाहरण के लिये, जयपुर जैसे शहर में पर्यटन में वृद्धि के कारण स्थानीय शिल्प, रियल एस्टेट विकास और परिवहन सेवाओं की मांग में वृद्धि हुई है।

- समावेशी विकास: पर्यटन उद्योग अपेक्षाकृत कमज़ोर अवसंरचना वाले नाजुक और दूरस्थ ग्रामीण, जनजातीय एवं पहाड़ी क्षेत्रों में आर्थिक गतिविधि को उत्प्रेरित करता है, जहाँ सांस्कृतिक विरासत स्थलों और पारिस्थितिक स्थलों का मूल्य उजागर होता है।

उदाहरण के लिये, भारत के पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों में पारिस्थितिकी पर्यटन (eco-tourism) ने रोज़गार के अवसर पैदा किये हैं और इन क्षेत्रों में सतत विकास को बढ़ावा दिया है।

- अंतर-सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान: यह नये विचारों को संवर्द्धित करता है, सहिष्णुता एवं विविधता की स्वीकृति को बढ़ावा देता है, इस प्रकार भारत में सामाजिक पूंजी के निर्माण में मदद करता है।

उदाहरण के लिये, जयपुर लिटरेचर फेस्टिवल और गोवा कार्निवल जैसे उत्सव पूरे भारत से पर्यटकों को आकर्षित करते हैं तथा राष्ट्रीय एकता एवं सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान की भावना को बढ़ावा देते हैं।

- रणनीतिक कूटनीति उपकरण: पर्यटन द्विपक्षीय संबंधों और लोगों के बीच परस्पर संपर्क को बढ़ाता है तथा स्थायी 'निर्भरता बंधन' (dependency bonds) का निर्माण करता है, जो शांति सुनिश्चित करता है।

उदाहरण के लिये, पर्यटन के माध्यम से जापान और दक्षिण कोरिया जैसे देशों के साथ भारत के सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान ने राजनयिक संबंधों और आपसी समझ को सुदृढ़ किया है।

भारत में पर्यटन संबंधी पहल

- पर्यटक स्थलों का आकर्षण बढ़ाना-स्वदेश दर्शन योजना: सांस्कृतिक, ऐतिहासिक और प्राकृतिक विरासत का लाभ उठाते हुए पूरे भारत में थीम आधारित पर्यटन सर्किट विकसित करने के लिये स्वदेश दर्शन योजना शुरू की गई थी। यह बौद्ध सर्किट, तटीय सर्किट, मरुस्थल सर्किट और इको सर्किट जैसे विभिन्न सर्किटों में बेहतर अवसंरचना एवं पर्यटक अनुभव सुनिश्चित करने का लक्ष्य रखता है।
- प्रसाद योजना (PRASAD Scheme): यह तीर्थ स्थलों के विकास और सौंदर्यीकरण पर केंद्रित है।
- हृदय (Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana-HRIDAY): इसका उद्देश्य विरासत शहरों को संरक्षित और पुनःजीवंत करना है।
- पर्यटन पर्व: घरेलू पर्यटन को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिये एक राष्ट्रव्यापी अभियान, जिसमें सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम एवं गतिविधियाँ शामिल होंगी।
- 'देखो अपना देश' पहल: देखो अपना देश पहल भारत के विविध भूदृश्यों और सांस्कृतिक विरासत के अन्वेषण को बढ़ावा देकर घरेलू पर्यटन को प्रोत्साहित करती है।
- एक भारत श्रेष्ठ भारत: 'एक भारत श्रेष्ठ भारत' राज्य युग्मों के माध्यम से सांस्कृतिक एकीकरण को बढ़ावा देता है, आदान-प्रदान एवं सहयोग को प्रोत्साहित करता है और एकता एवं विविधता को बढ़ावा देता है; इस प्रकार,

घरेलू पर्यटन और सांस्कृतिक सराहना (cultural appreciation) को बढ़ाता है।

- राष्ट्रीय पर्यटन नीति, 2022: नवीन नीति का उद्देश्य देश में पर्यटन विकास के लिये ढाँचागत स्थितियों में सुधार करना, पर्यटन उद्योगों को समर्थन देना, पर्यटन को सुदृढ़ करना, सहायक कार्यों एवं पर्यटन उप-क्षेत्रों को विकसित करना और निम्नलिखित पाँच प्रमुख क्षेत्रों पर ध्यान केंद्रित करना है:

हरित पर्यटन,

डिजिटल पर्यटन,

गंतव्य प्रबंधन,

आतिथ्य क्षेत्र में कौशल विकास, और

सूक्ष्म, लघु और मध्यम उद्यमों (MSMEs) से संबंधित पर्यटन को समर्थन देना।

डिजिटल पहल

- ई-वीजा सुविधा: यह पहल वीजा आवेदन प्रक्रिया को सरल बनाती है, जिससे पर्यटकों को ऑनलाइन आवेदन करने और इलेक्ट्रॉनिक वीजा प्राप्त करने की सुविधा मिलती है। इससे सुविधा बढ़ती है और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय आगमन को बढ़ावा मिलता है।
- वेब-आधारित ई-टिकटिंग: प्रमुख पर्यटक आकर्षण स्थलों और स्मारकों के लिये कार्यान्वित यह प्रणाली प्रतीक्षा समय को कम करती है तथा आगंतुक प्रबंधन में सुधार करती है।
- आतिथ्य उद्योग का राष्ट्रीय एकीकृत डेटाबेस (National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry- NIDHI): देश भर में आवास इकाइयों के एक व्यापक डेटाबेस के रूप में NIDHI का उद्देश्य आतिथ्य क्षेत्र के बारे में सटीक एवं अद्यतन जानकारी प्रदान करना है।
- स्वच्छ पर्यटन मोबाइल ऐप: पर्यटन स्थलों पर स्वच्छता संबंधी मुद्दों के समाधान के लिये शुरू किया गया यह ऐप पर्यटकों को गंदगी वाले क्षेत्रों की

सूचना देने की सुविधा देता है, जिससे अधिकारियों द्वारा समय पर कार्रवाई सुनिश्चित होती है।

विश्वसनीय पर्यटन

यह एक महत्वपूर्ण अवधारणा और अभ्यास है जिसका उद्देश्य दुनिया की अर्थव्यवस्थाओं और संस्कृतियों के परस्पर जुड़ाव को ध्यान में रखते हुए जिम्मेदार और पर्यावरण के अनुकूल यात्रा को बढ़ावा देना है। इसका उद्देश्य पर्यावरण, स्थानीय समुदायों और संस्कृति पर पर्यटन के नकारात्मक प्रभावों को कम करना है, जबकि इसमें शामिल सभी हितधारकों के लिए लाभ को अधिकतम करना है। वैश्वीकृत दुनिया में टिकाऊ पर्यटन के कुछ प्रमुख पहलू इस प्रकार हैं:

- पर्यावरण संरक्षण जैसे, कार्बन फुटप्रिंट को कम करना, और प्राकृतिक संसाधनों की सुरक्षा करना।
- सांस्कृतिक सम्मान, संरक्षण और स्थानीय अर्थव्यवस्थाओं को समर्थन।
- समुदाय-आधारित पर्यटन के माध्यम से सामुदायिक भागीदारी और सशक्तिकरण।
- विरासत स्थलों का संरक्षण।
- प्रौद्योगिकी और नवाचार का उपयोग करके स्मार्ट गंतव्य प्रबंधन
- जिम्मेदार पर्यटन के महत्व के बारे में यात्रियों के बीच जागरूकता बढ़ाना।
- पर्यावरण और सांस्कृतिक संरक्षण कानूनों को लागू करना तथा प्रोत्साहनों और नीतियों के माध्यम से टिकाऊ प्रथाओं को बढ़ावा देना।

पर्यटन नीति और अंतरराष्ट्रीय संबंध

पर्यटन नीतियाँ और अंतरराष्ट्रीय संबंध आपस में घनिष्ठ रूप से जुड़े हुए हैं। जिस तरह से देश पर्यटन को अपनाते हैं, जिसमें उनकी वीजा नीतियाँ, विपणन रणनीतियाँ और संकट प्रबंधन शामिल हैं, वे अन्य देशों के साथ उनके कूटनीतिक संबंधों को महत्वपूर्ण रूप से प्रभावित कर सकते हैं। जब प्रभावी ढंग से प्रबंधित किया जाता है, तो पर्यटन आपसी समझ, आर्थिक सहयोग और शांतिपूर्ण अंतरराष्ट्रीय संबंधों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए एक शक्ति हो सकता है। सरकार के राजनीतिक निर्णय सीधे तौर पर प्रभावित

करते हैं कि पर्यटन कैसे विकसित होता है। पर्यटन कूटनीति की उन्नति और इसके अनुप्रयोग के परिणामस्वरूप पर्यटकों का आगमन, रोजगार के अवसर और राष्ट्रीय आय में वृद्धि के कारण आर्थिक समृद्धि और अंततः एक सुरक्षित और शांतिपूर्ण समाज की स्थापना हो सकती है। दूसरी ओर, रैखिक और अनुप्रस्थ शक्तियों के संगम ने सरकारों को पर्यटन की घटना को अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंधों में प्रभाव के लिए एक प्रभावी साधन के रूप में देखने और पर्यटन क्षेत्र को बढ़ाने के लिए कूटनीति को एक शक्तिशाली रणनीति के रूप में नियोजित करने के लिए प्रेरित किया है। कूटनीति का मूल लक्ष्य उन संबंधों में देश के हितों की रक्षा करते हुए अन्य देशों के साथ संबंधों को बढ़ावा देना है।

निष्कर्ष

पर्यटन और वैश्वीकरण परस्पर जुड़ी हुई घटनाएँ हैं जो हाल के दशकों में काफी विकसित हुई हैं। वैश्वीकरण का तात्पर्य प्रौद्योगिकी, संचार, परिवहन और व्यापार में प्रगति के कारण देशों और संस्कृतियों के बीच बढ़ती हुई परस्पर संबद्धता और अन्योन्याश्रयता से है। दूसरी ओर, पर्यटन में अवकाश, मनोरंजन, व्यवसाय या अन्य उद्देश्यों के लिए लोगों का एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान पर जाना शामिल है। जबकि वैश्वीकरण ने पर्यटन उद्योग के विकास को सुगम बनाया है, पर्यटन ने बदले में, दुनिया भर में लोगों, संस्कृतियों और अर्थव्यवस्थाओं को जोड़कर वैश्वीकरण के प्रसार में योगदान दिया है। हालाँकि, स्थानीय संस्कृतियों, पर्यावरण और समुदायों के लिए आर्थिक लाभ और संभावित नकारात्मक परिणामों दोनों पर विचार करते हुए, पर्यटन के प्रभावों को जिम्मेदारी से प्रबंधित करना महत्वपूर्ण है।

संदर्भ ग्रंथ सूची

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पर्यटन कूटनीति भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का वैश्विक आग्रह अमित त्यागी*

सारांश

देशों के बीच परस्पर संबंध कूटनीति हैं। ये संबंध नीयत के आधार पर विश्वसनीय बनते हैं। कुछ विचारधाराएँ वसुधैव कुटुंबकम के आधार सम्पूर्ण धरा को अपना मानकर चलती हैं तो कुछ विचारधाराएँ सम्पूर्ण विश्व को अपने उपभोग की वस्तु मानती हैं। जैसे दक्षिण अफ्रीका में अंग्रेजों के आने पर कहा जाता है कि वह जब आए तब उनके पास बाइबल थी और हमारे पास हमारी जमीनें। 100 साल के बाद हमारे पास उनकी बाइबल थी और उनके पास हमारी जमीनें। सेवा का भाव दिखाकर, धर्मांतरण के द्वारा और उपभोग का प्रयोग करके, देशों की संस्कृति को नष्ट करने का यह अनुपम उद्धारण है। पश्चिम और वहाँ से उपजे पंथों की विचारधारा रेखीय है। जन्म, जीवन, मरण और उसके बाद क़यामत/जजमेंट डे, इसलिए ये विचारधारा मृत्यु के बाद क़यामत/जजमेंट डे को महत्वपूर्ण मानती हैं। सनातनी जीवन दर्शन रेखिय है जिसमें जन्म, जीवन, मरण एवं फिर पुनर्जन्म की अवधारणा है। इसलिए यह जीवन दर्शन प्रकृति और सृष्टि को उपभोग की वस्तु न मानकर आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए सँजोने का कार्य करता है। यही कारण है कि भारतीय भूभाग में पुरातन शिल्प भी बेजोड़ है, यहाँ के त्यौहार भी प्रकृति केन्द्रित हैं। यहाँ के लोग जहाँ गये उन्होंने वहाँ की संस्कृति को नष्ट नहीं किया बल्कि वहाँ अपनी ज्ञान परंपरा को प्रकाशमान किया। भारत के समृद्धशाली वैभव को समझने विदेशी भारत आते हैं और उनकी संख्या जिस तरह निरंतर बढ़ रही है, वह उत्साहित करने वाली है। सत्ता के द्वारा किसी देश पर राज करने से महत्वपूर्ण है दिलो पर राज करना।

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नागरिकों का धर्म परिवर्तन करने से बेहतर हैं उन्हें अपने आचरण से प्रभावित करना। बस यही वह सनातनी विचार है जिसे पर्यटन कूटनीति कहा जाता है।

प्रस्तावना

आज दुनिया में सिर्फ स्वयं को बेहतर दिखाने और वर्चस्व की जंग मची हुई है। रूस-यूक्रेन युद्ध, इजरायल-फिलिस्तीन युद्ध और अन्य देशों के बीच इस समय वैश्विक युद्धों की भरमार है। धन बल के द्वारा एक देश दुसरे देश पर विजय पाने को आमादा है। व्यक्तिगत स्तर पर इन देशों के समर्थक कभी कभी इतने ज़्यादा प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक हो जाते हैं कि यदि कोई कानूनी नियंत्रण ना हो तो वह दूसरे व्यक्ति को मारने को तैयार है। छोटी छोटी बात पर लोगों का आक्रामक हो जाना और जगह जगह हो रही हिंसा इस बात का सबूत है कि शायद मानवता ही आज खतरे में है। इस खतरे को पैदा भी उन्होंने किया है जो इसकी रक्षा करने का दंभ भरते हैं। ऐसे में विश्व शांति और आध्यात्मिक उन्नति के रूप में इन देशों के लोग सबसे प्राचीन और समृद्ध सनातनी सभ्यता को समझने भारत आते हैं। इस बात को आंकड़ों से समझा जा सकता है। (तालिका 2.9.1) । विदेशी पर्यटकों की भारत भ्रमण के दौरान रुकने की अवधि इस बात का आभास देती है कि उनका उद्देश्य क्या है ? जैसे आंकड़े बताते हैं कि कनाडा से आने वाले पर्यटक औसतन 44.84 दिन भारत में प्रवास करते हैं। संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका से आने वाले पर्यटक 34.33 दिन, यमन से आने वाले 68 दिन, अफ़ग़ानिस्तान से आने वाले 62.90 दिन, पाकिस्तान से आने वाले 63.68 दिन, इन्डोनेशिया से आने वाले 24.65 दिन, मयंमार से आने वाले 31.89 दिन, चीन से आने वाले 64.50 दिन, जापान से 32.84 दिन का औसतन प्रवास करते हैं। प्रवास की अवधि विदेशी पर्यटकों के मनोविज्ञान को काफी कुछ समझा सकती है। अब वर्तमान वैश्विक परिस्थिति को समझने के लिए हमें आज से आठ दशक पीछे जाना होगा।

विश्व में मानवाधिकार के महत्व को समझते हुए संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा ने 1948 में 10 दिसम्बर को मानवाधिकार दिवस की शुरुआत की थी। भारत में 26 सितंबर, 1993 से

मानव अधिकार कानून अमल में लाया गया। 1940 के दौरान दो विश्वयुद्ध के कारण मित्र और शत्रु राष्ट्र नाम के दोनो गुटों के धन संसाधन खत्म हो गये। इन कुल आठ देशों को इन युद्धों में धन-जन की खूब हानि हुयी। 'धन' की हानि की भरपाई के लिए इन आठ देशों ने बाकी के लगभग डेढ़ सौ देशों की धन सम्पदा, प्राकृतिक एवं खनिज संसाधनों पर नज़रें गड़ानी शुरू की। 'जन' की भरपाई के लिए धर्मांतरण का काम करने वाली एनजीओ को इन देशों में स्थापित करने की परिकल्पना विकसित की। बिना किसी कारण किसी के घर में घुसना आसान नहीं होता इसलिए ये देश विकसित और विकासशील का अंतर पैदा करने लगे। एक सुनियोजित योजना के अंतर्गत खुद को विकसित राष्ट्र बताकर अन्य देशों को विकासशील एवं गरीब देशों की श्रेणी में रख दिया गया। इसके बाद विकासशील एवं गरीब देशों में यह देश मानवाधिकार हनन रोकने के नाम पर घुस गये। धीरे धीरे उन्होंने वहाँ पैठ बनानी शुरू कर दी। चूंकि हर देश में कुछ आंतरिक असंतोष होता है उसे यह विकसित देश हवा देने लगे। स्थानीय असंतोष, उस कारण होने वाली हिंसा एवं लोगों की मूलभूत आवश्यकताओं में कमी को अन्तराष्ट्रिय मानवाधिकार का हनन बताकर खूब प्रचारित किया गया।

खाड़ी देशों में तेल का विशाल भंडार विकसित देशों को दिखा तो उन्हें वहाँ मानवाधिकार का हनन दिखने लगा। भारत में प्राकृतिक संसाधनों की प्रचुरता थी वहाँ मानवाधिकार की आड़ में एनजीओ जड़े जमाने लगीं। भारत और पाकिस्तान के बीच अस्थिरता रहने पर दोनों देशों को हथियार बेचने के लिए भारतीय उपमहाद्वीप को भी खूब अस्थिर किया गया। अफ़ग़ानिस्तान में पहले लादेन को खड़ा किया गया इसके बाद उसे खत्म किया गया। इराक में सद्दाम हुसैन की बलि चढ़ी तो ओसामा, बगदादी इस कड़ी के अगले नाम रहे। विश्व में जहां जहां मानवाधिकार हनन की बात सुनने को मिलती है वहाँ वहाँ विकसित देशों के द्वारा बोयी गयी अस्थिरता ही प्रमुख कारण बनकर सामने उभरती है। भारत में मानवाधिकार का झुनझुना थोड़ा कम बजता है क्योंकि जिस समय अन्तराष्ट्रिय मानवाधिकार पर विमर्श चल रहा था उस समय काल में ही भारत के संविधान का निर्माण चल रहा था। जो भी अन्तराष्ट्रिय मानवाधिकार हैं वह भारत में मूल अधिकार बनाकर संविधान में समाहित कर दिये गये। भारत की संयुक्त परिवार व्यवस्था एवं अतिथि को भगवान समझने का संस्कार विदेशी सभ्यताओं को प्रेम और आनंद का वास्तविक अर्थ समझा देता है। इसके बाद किसी मानवाधिकार का कोई अस्तित्व नहीं बचता है। यदि भारतीय वेदों और शास्त्रों की चर्चा करें तो सिर्फ

एक श्लोक में सारे मानवाधिकार समाहित हैं। सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः, सर्वे संतु निरामयः, सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु, माँ कश्चित् दुःखभाग भवेत्। वैश्विक अस्थिरता के मध्य भारत की आध्यात्मिक चेतना, आर्थिक संरचना, शिल्प निर्माण आदि को समझने विदेशियों का भारत आना और एक श्लोक का अर्थ ही भारत की पर्यटन कूटनीति का सार है।

भारतीय शिल्प एवं आर्थिक केंद्र मंदिर

भारत का इतिहास समृद्ध और गौरवशाली रहा है। भारत में परम्पराएँ, त्यौहार, शिल्प और ज्ञान का अपार भंडार है जिस पर शोध करने विदेशी भारत में आते हैं। भारत में रंगों का पर्व होली हो या दीपों का पर्व दीपावली, दोनों त्यौहारों की परम्पराएँ विदेशियों को आकर्षित करती हैं। भारत के दक्षिण में मंदिरों का शिल्प अद्भुत एवं अकल्पनीय है। लेपाक्षी मंदिर, मीनाक्षी मंदिर बेजोड़ शिल्प हैं। ज्ञान के रूप में भारत अनेक विद्याओं का जनक एवं ज्ञाता रहा है। आयुर्वेदिक जीवन शैली का प्रमुख तत्व योग अब अन्तराष्ट्रीय योग दिवस के रूप में सम्पूर्ण विश्व में भारत का ध्वजवाहक है। धार्मिक रूप से देखें तो बौद्ध धर्म के अनुयायियों के लिए उत्तर भारत के कई स्थान पूजनीय हैं। सारनाथ, सांची, बौद्ध गया में आने वाले बौद्ध भारतीयता में अपनी जड़ें महसूस करते हैं। भारतीय मंदिर शिल्प और आध्यात्मिक चेतना को जागृत करने का केंद्र हैं, किन्तु एक समय ऐसा भी था जब यह भारत की आर्थिक संरचना का प्रमुख केंद्र थे। यह आर्थिक गतिविधियों के संचालक और नियामक थे।

इसको समझने के लिए पहले कुछ आंकड़ों पर गौर करते हैं। (तालिका 2.1.1) 1981 में भारत में आने वाले विदेशी पर्यटकों की संख्या 1.28 मिलियन थी। उस समय पर्यटकों में वृद्धि दर 2 प्रतिशत थी। 1991 में पर्यटकों की संख्या 1.68 मिलियन तक बढ़ी किन्तु वृद्धि दर नकारात्मक -1.7 प्रतिशत रही। 2001 में विदेशी पर्यटक 2.54 मिलियन रहे और तब भी वृद्धि दर नकारात्मक -4.2 प्रतिशत रही। 2011 में विदेशी पर्यटकों की संख्या 9.2 प्रतिशत वृद्धि दर के साथ 6.31 मिलियन रही। 2014 में 10.2 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि दर के साथ 7.68 मिलियन पर्यटक भारत आये। 2017 में 14.1 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि दर के साथ

पर्यटकों की संख्या ने 10.04 मिलियन का रिकार्ड आंकड़ा छुआ। यह आंकड़ा इस बात को स्पष्ट करते हैं कि किस तरह भारत और भारत से जुड़े विषयों पर विदेशी आकर्षित हो रहे हैं। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के अनेक विषय वह अपने शोध कार्यों में उपयोग कर रहे हैं। आज जब वैश्विक व्यवस्था में मंदी आती है और बड़े बड़े नामी बैंक डूब जाते हैं तब नामचीन अर्थशास्त्री भी मंदिर से जुड़ी भारतीय बैंकिंग व्यवस्था को समझने भारत आते हैं। मंदिरों के न्यासियों के द्वारा अपनी भूमिका के समुचित निर्वहन के कारण लोग अपनी जमा पूंजी को मंदिरों में रखना सुरक्षित समझते थे। राजा भी अपना कोश मंदिरों में रखते थे और आपातकाल में मंदिरों से उधर लेने की परंपरा भी रही है।

प्रख्यात आर्थिक इतिहासकार अंगस मेडिसिन के अनुसार *‘प्राचीन काल से 18वीं शताब्दी तक भारत विश्व की सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था रहा है।’* एमजीएस नारायणन और केशव वेलुठाट के अनुसार *‘दक्षिण भारतीय मंदिर स्वर्ण, रजत तथा अन्य बहुमूल्य धातुओं के गोदाम बन चुके थे।’* विजय नगर स्थित तिरुपति मंदिर इसका प्रमुख उदाहरण है। वर्ष 1429 के एक अभिलेख के अनुसार विजय नगर सम्राट देवराय द्वितीय ने विक्रमादित्यमंगलम नामक गाँव तिरुपति मंदिर को दान दिया था। 1495 में के रामानुजम अयांगार ने अपने कुल अनुदान 65 हजार पन्नम में से 13 हजार पाँच सौ पन्नम गाँव विक्रमादित्यमंगलम गाँव की सिचाई योजना हेतु दिया। सिचाई योजना के द्वारा कृषि को प्रमुख आर्थिक गतिविधि का प्रयास रहता था। भारत में कभी खाद्य सुरक्षा कानून के द्वारा भोजन व्यवस्था का प्रावधान नहीं था। ग्यारहवीं शताब्दी के एक अभिलेख के अनुसार शिक्षकों और पुजारियों के अतिरिक्त तंजौर मंदिर में 609 कर्मचारी कार्यरत थे।

इस तरह देखें तो भारतीय संदर्भ में पर्यटन कूटनीति एक सामान्य सनातनी व्यवस्था है जो वृहद रूप से कार्य करती है। वसुधैव कुटुंबकम् के अंदर पर्यटन कूटनीति का सार छिपा है। भारतीय पर्यटन कूटनीति को समझने के लिए किसी रॉकेट साइन्स का ज्ञाता होने की आवश्यकता नहीं है, भारत की सर्वांगीण ज्ञान परंपरा को समझने का वैश्विक आग्रह ही पर्यटन कूटनीति है। इसके साथ साथ

जिस तरह भारत में चिकित्सा सेवाओं का विस्तार हो रहा है तो उस क्रम में भारत में चिकित्सा पर्यटन भी बढ़ रहा है। कुछ साल पहले तक भारत के लोग विदेशों में इलाज़ कराने जाते थे किन्तु आज परिदृश्य बदल गया है। भारत एलोपैथ और आयुर्वेद दोनों विधाओं में विदेशियों को सेवाएँ दे रहा है। भारत का योग वर्तमान में 21 जून को वैश्विक योग दिवस के रूप में मनाया जाता है। ऐतिहासिक धरोहरों को समेटे भारतीय सभ्यता, इतिहास और संस्कृति विज्ञान की अग्रणी सभ्यताओं में रही है। आज भारत की ज्ञान परंपरा सम्मान पा रही है किन्तु पूर्व में विदेशी लोगों ने यहाँ आकर हमारे ज्ञान, विज्ञान और धरोहरों को नष्ट करने की कोशिश की।

वैश्विक प्रभुराम एवं पर्यटन कूटनीति

मुगल काल में कई भारतीय इमारतों को या तो तोड़ा गया या उनका नाम बदलकर मुगलकालीन कर दिया गया। किसी एक इमारत की चर्चा करना या उनका नाम लेना उचित नहीं है। इसके बाद अंग्रेजों ने भारत की सांस्कृतिक विरासत के विराट स्वरूप को महसूस किया। भारतीय शिल्प विज्ञान से सीखा। अपने देश में जाकर उस विज्ञान का लाभ लिया। इमारतें बनवाई और इसके साथ ही भारत की सभ्यता पर हमला करते हुये धरोहरों को नष्ट करने की कोशिश भी की। यानि की हर तरफ से भारतीय संस्कृति, विज्ञान एवं शिल्प पर हमले होते रहे। इन सबके बीच हिंदुस्तान वक्रत के थपेड़े खाते हुये स्वयं को जीवित रखे रहा। भारत के समृद्धशाली विरासत की गतिशीलता कितनी रही है इसका अंदाज़ा सिंधु घाटी सभ्यता से ही आरंभ हो जाता है। मानव सभ्यता की शुरूआत माने जाने वाली सिंधु घाटी सभ्यता एक रहस्यमयी संस्कृति मानी जाती है। भारत के उत्तर पश्चिम के आस पास के इलाकों में दिखने वाली इस सभ्यता के साथ भारत का विस्तार भारत के दक्षिणी इलाकों में किसान समुदाय तक पाया गया। वृहद भारत के अंदर अंतर्निहित अनेक संस्कृतियों के समागम ने भारत को अन्य सभ्यताओं से उन्नत रखा। लोहे, ताँबे और अन्य धातुओं के उपयोग के प्रमाण किसी अन्य सभ्यता से पहले भारतीय सभ्यता में मिलते हैं।

इन धातुओं का शिल्प निर्माण में बेहद महत्वपूर्ण योगदान है, पर भारत के गौरवशाली इतिहास का केंद्र बिन्दु आज भी प्रभु श्रीराम हैं।

अयोध्या में श्रीराम जन्मभूमि मंदिर निर्माण का व्यापक वैश्विक प्रभाव पड़ा है। भारत में 2024 में आने वाले पर्यटकों की बढ़ती संख्या इस बात को सत्यापित करती है। पहले आंकड़ों पर ध्यान देते हैं। भारत में जनवरी से मई 2024 के मध्य आने वाले पर्यटकों की संख्या 40.72 लाख रही है। जनवरी से मई 2023 में यह आंकड़ा 37.32 लाख था। वर्ष 2023 से वर्ष 2024 की तुलना करें तो वृद्धि दर 9.1 प्रतिशत रही है। इस कारण विदेशी मुद्रा आय में वृद्धि हुयी है। जनवरी- मई 2023 में विदेशी मुद्रा आय 88,441 करोड़ की तुलना में जनवरी-मई 2024 में विदेशी मुद्रा आय 1,08,362 करोड़ हुयी है। आय में वृद्धि दर 22.52 प्रतिशत की रही है। यह आंकड़े केन्द्रीय पर्यटन मंत्री द्वारा लोकसभा के पटल पर रखे गए आंकड़े हैं। रामराज और वैश्विक संदर्भ में देखें तो श्रीराम का चरित्र और व्यक्तित्व जितना दिव्य और व्यापक है उतना ही विश्वव्यापी है। सिर्फ वर्तमान भारत की सीमाओं तक यह सीमित नहीं है बल्कि चारों दिशाओं में प्रभु राम के नाम का प्रताप अलग अलग स्वरूप में दिखाई देता है। इसको समझने, देखने के लिए विदेशी पर्यटक यहाँ आते हैं। अनेक देशों में, अनेक भाषाओं में, अनेक नामों से प्रभु श्रीराम की कथाएँ हैं।

हिन्दी में रामचरितमानस, संस्कृत सहित कई भाषाओं में राम की कथाएँ हैं। तुलसीदास ने हिन्दी, बाल्मीकी, कालीदास ने संस्कृत में राम का चरित्र चित्रण किया तो कन्नड में ऋषि कंबन द्वारा रचित 'कंब रामायण' में राम के चरित्र का विवरण मिलता है। भारत के बाहर चीन के 'लियो ताउत्स चिंग' का कथानक वाल्मीकि रामायण से संबन्धित है। चीन के उपन्यासकार उचेंग की कथा 'द मंकी हसी ऊंचि' राम भक्त हनुमान की चीनी कथा है। इसके साथ साथ थाईलैंड में 'रामकियेन', इन्डोनेशिया में 'ककविन रामायण', लाओस में 'फालाम' एवं 'पोमचाक' है तो तमिल में चक्रवर्ती राजगोपालाचारी की 'तिरुमगन रामायण'। इतना ही नहीं दक्षिण एशिया के देशों मलेशिया, कंबोडिया, श्रीलंका एवम

फिलीपींस तक राम के चरित्र की व्यापकता फैली हुयी है। सिर्फ विदेशों में ही नहीं बल्कि भारत के अंदर भी कई मुस्लिम लेखकों और विचारकों ने प्रभु राम के चरित्र पर उल्लेखनीय काम किया है। अल्लामा इकबाल राम के लिए कहते हैं कि 'है राम के वजूद पर हिंदोस्तां को नाज, अहले नज़र समझते हैं उनको इमामें हिंद'। सागर निजामी कहते हैं कि 'साहिल ए सरयू यहाँ गंगा यहाँ जमुना यहाँ, कृष्ण और राधा यहाँ, राम यहाँ सीता यहाँ। हिंदीओ के दिल में बाकी है मुहब्बत राम की, मिट नहीं सकती क़यामत तक, हुकूमत राम की'।

राम की हुकूमत सदियों तक इसलिए बाकी है क्योंकि राम ने अपने स्वार्थ के लिए विजय प्राप्त नहीं की। बालि और रावण का वध किया तो सुग्रीव और विभीषण को वहाँ का राजा बनाया। लक्ष्मण से संवाद में राम कहते हैं कि 'अपि स्वर्णमयी लंका न मे लक्ष्मणः रोचते। जननी जन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी'। इसका अर्थ है कि 'हे लक्ष्मण सोने की लंका भी मुझे अच्छी नहीं लगती है। माता और मातृभूमि मुझे स्वर्ग से भी बढ़कर है। इसी तरह कबीर भी परमार्थ को जीवन का दर्शन बताते हैं। राम का जीवन भी परमार्थ का जीवन ही रहा। रामराज में अपने लिए नहीं दूसरे के लिए जीवन जीने का वास्तविक चिंतन है। कबीर कहते हैं। 'मरूँ पर माँगू नहीं, अपने तन के काज। परमारथ के कारणे, मोहिं न आवै लाज'। इसका अर्थ है कि मैं मर जाऊँगा किन्तु अपने शरीर के स्वार्थ के लिए नहीं माँगूँगा, परन्तु परमार्थ के लिए माँगने में मुझे लज्जा नहीं लगती। इसी परमार्थ से रामराज का आधारभूत सिद्धान्त प्राप्त होता है। अयोध्या में श्री राम जन्मभूमि मंदिर का निर्माण और उसके बाद आने वाले पर्यटकों की बढ़ती संख्या भारत की सफल पर्यटन कूटनीति का परिचायक है।

धार्मिक पर्यटन बनाम पर्यटन कूटनीति

धार्मिक पर्यटन और पर्यटन कूटनीति दो अलग अलग विषय हैं। धार्मिक पर्यटन को पर्यटन कूटनीति का सिर्फ एक भाग कहा जा सकता है किन्तु यह एक बहुत सशक्त कूटनीति का कार्य करता है। एक ओर कुछ भारतीय धार्मिक पर्यटन के नाम पर सिर्फ घूमने को प्राथमिकता देते हैं तो वहीं भारत में आने विदेशी

पर्यटक सिर्फ मौज मस्ती के लिए नहीं बल्कि समझने के लिए आते दिख रहे हैं। भारत की सांस्कृतिक विरासत और प्राचीन ऐतिहासिक कलाकृतियाँ हमें हमारे गौरवशाली इतिहास के विराट स्वरूप के दर्शन कराती हैं। दक्षिण भारत के मंदिरों में शिल्प की कारीगरी का एक नमूना तब देखने को मिलता है जब पहाड़ों को ऊपर से नीचे की तरफ काटकर मंदिरों का निर्माण किया गया। प्राचीन काल में निर्मित भारत का शिल्प इतना उन्नत रहा है कि आज का आधुनिक विज्ञान भी उसके रहस्यों को सुलझाने में नाकामयाब दिखता है।

चाहें हम लेपाक्षी मंदिर के हवा में झूलते हुये खंबों की बात करें या दक्षिण भारत के उन कई मंदिरों की जो पहाड़ को काटकर बनाये गए हैं। जिस समय क्रेन और अन्य औज़ार उपलब्ध नहीं थे उस समय वृहदीश्वर मंदिर के शीर्ष पर किस तरह भारी भरकम कलश को विराजमान किया जाता होगा, यह आज भी एक चमत्कार से कम नहीं है। तमिलनाडु के तंजौर ज़िले में स्थित वृहदेश्वर मंदिर शिव मंदिर है जिसे चोल शासकों के द्वारा ग्यारवी सदी के आरंभ में बनवाया गया था। यह मंदिर कई स्थानों पर आधुनिक विज्ञान को चुनौती दिखाई देता है। ग्रेनाइट से बने मंदिर के आस पास के इलाकों में दूर दूर तक ग्रेनाइट पत्थर की खाने नहीं हैं। किस तरह यहाँ ग्रेनाइट पत्थर को लाया गया होगा यह आज भी रहस्य है। चूंकि उस दौर में परिवहन के साधन इतने सुगम नहीं थे इसलिए इसका महत्व और बढ़ जाता है।

लेपाक्षी मंदिर आंध्र प्रदेश के अनंतपुर ज़िले में लेपाक्षी गांव में स्थित है। ऐसी मान्यता है कि इस गाँव का नाम श्रीराम के आगमन पर पड़ा था। पहले राम, लक्ष्मण और सीता संग उनका यहाँ आगमन हुआ था और बाद में सीताहरण के दौरान गिद्धराज जटायु उनको यहाँ घायल अवस्था में मिले थे। श्रीराम ने घायल जटायु को देखकर लेपाक्षी कहा था। लेपाक्षी एक तेलगू शब्द है जिसका अर्थ है 'उठो पक्षी'। 16वीं शताब्दी में निर्मित लेपाक्षी मंदिर विजयनगर शैली के मंदिरों का विलक्षण उदाहरण है। यहाँ विराजित भगवान गणेश की मूर्ति शिल्प का बेजोड़ नमूना है। इस मंदिर की वास्तुकला की एक खास बात यह है कि इसमें सिर्फ भगवान के मंदिर नहीं हैं बल्कि यहाँ नृत्यों और संगीतकारों का भी चित्रण मिलता है। मजबूत पत्थरों को काटकर उन पर की गयी

नक्काशी न सिर्फ लुभावनी है बल्कि स्थायित्व लिये हुये भी है। इस मंदिर में कुल 72 खंबे हैं जिन पर मंदिर की आकृति टिकी हुयी है। वास्तुकला के अनुपम विज्ञान को समेटे हुये इनमे एक खंबा ऐसा है जो हवा में झूलता हुआ साफ दिखाई देता है। ज़मीन पर जिस स्थान पर खंबे और भूमि का मिलन होता है वहाँ पर खाली स्थान हैं। इनके बीच से कोई भी कपड़ा आसानी से निकल जाता है। इस खंबे की लंबाई 27 फिट एवं चौड़ाई 15 फिट के आसपास है।

कोणार्क का सूर्य मंदिर पुरी के उत्तर पूर्वी किनारे पर समुद्र तट के करीब निर्मित है। यह मंदिर भारत के बेहद प्राचीन मंदिरों में है और इसे 1236-1264 ईसा पूर्व गंग वंश के राजा नृसिंह देव द्वारा बनवाया गया था। उस समय भी जिस तरह से पत्थर पर नक्काशी करके इस मंदिर को बनाया गया था वह इस बात का प्रमाण है कि हजारों साल पहले भी भारत का शिल्प कितना उन्नत रहा था। भारत की धार्मिक आस्था कितनी प्रबल थी और भारत का विज्ञान सूर्य आदि को अपने इष्ट देव के रूप में स्वीकार कर चुका था। इसका प्रमाण इस बात से मिलता है कि सम्पूर्ण मंदिर परिसर में बारह जोड़ी चक्रों वाले सात घोड़ों से खींचे जाने वाले सूर्यदेव का रथ निर्मित है। यहाँ सूर्य को बिंरचि नारायण के नाम से पुकारा जाता है और मंदिर में कुछ कामुक शिल्पकृतियाँ भी मौजूद रही हैं।

पवित्र मंदिरों और स्थापत्य कला के बेजोड़ नमूनों से भरपूर तमिलनाडु के मदुरै को भगवान शिव और महाबलीपुरम को भगवान विष्णु के वामन अवतार की कृपाभूमि मानते हैं। यहाँ स्थित मीनाक्षी मन्दिर में कई आकर्षण के केंद्र हैं जैसे हज़ार स्तम्भ मंडपम । इसका वास्तविक नाम स्तंभ मण्डप है। इनमे खास बात यह है कि प्रत्येक स्तंभ को थाप देने से भिन्न भिन्न स्वर निकलते हैं। इस रहस्य को सुलझाने में आज का विज्ञान विफल रहा है। किस तरह से किस विज्ञान के द्वारा इन स्तंभों का निर्माण किया गया है यह उस काल की शिल्प कला को दर्शाता है। इस मंदिर की खूबसूरती सिर्फ इसके शिल्प में निहित नहीं है बल्कि यह भारत के सबसे वैभवशाली मंदिरों में से एक हैं। इस मंदिर के पास इतने ज़्यादा हीरे जवाहरात एवं आभूषण मौजूद हैं कि लोग दातों तले उँगलियाँ दबा लेते हैं। भारत की समृद्ध और धन धान्य से भरपूर परंपरा की कहानी इस मंदिर के द्वारा परिलक्षित होती है। दक्षिण की काशी के रूप में

मशहूर कांचीपुरम को मोक्ष का सातवां द्वार भी कहा जाता है। मंदिर और शिल्प पर चर्चा बहुत लंबी हो सकती है। पूर्व से पश्चिम तक, उत्तर से दक्षिण तक और सम्पूर्ण अखंड भारत में शिल्प, ज्ञान और आध्यात्मिक चेतना के उद्धारण भरे हुये हैं।

निष्कर्ष

जब वैश्विक स्तर पर विचारधाराओं का टकराव देखा जा रहा है तब सम्पूर्ण विश्व वैश्विक शांति और स्थायित्व की राह देख रहा है। विभिन्न संस्कृतियों की विचारधारा वाले देश आज परस्पर वर्चस्व की लड़ाई लड़ रहे हैं। इन विचारधाराओं के कुछ समर्थक अपने देश में भी अस्थिरता फैला रहे हैं, उनसे सतर्क रहने की आवश्यकता है। जिस अनुपात में विदेशी पर्यटक भारत आ रहे हैं और यहाँ समय दे रहे हैं इससे एक बात तो स्पष्ट है कि भारत की पर्यटन कूटनीति सफल हो रही है। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा विदेशियों को वैश्विक अस्थिरता के मध्य एक मार्ग प्रदान कर रही है। भारत वैश्विक स्तर पर एक बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था के रूप में उभर रहा है। यह एक अच्छा संकेत है। इन सबके मध्य हमें कुछ सतर्क रहने की भी आवश्यकता है। जिस तरह धार्मिक स्थानों को पर्यटन के रूप में तैयार किया जा रहा है, उससे राजस्व की प्राप्ति तो हो रही है किन्तु धार्मिक आस्था के केंद्र खिलवाड़ का माध्यम बन रहे हैं। धार्मिक स्थल यदि आस्था के साथ पर्यटन से जुड़े रहेंगे, तो शुभ संकेत हैं। मौज मस्ती के लिए होने वाला धार्मिक पर्यटन सांस्कृतिक जड़ों को कमजोर कर देता है। यदि विदेशी पर्यटकों का भारत को देखने, समझने और मनन करने के लिए भारत आना, भारत को समझना भारत की पर्यटन कूटनीति को सशक्त कर रहा है, तब भारतीय नागरिकों को भी अपने उत्तरदायित्व को गंभीरता से लेना होगा।

संदर्भ

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HYBRID WARFARE AND THE CROSS TRAINED THEATRE OF COMMAND

*Alok Vijayant**

**स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ २-३१॥**
(Shri Madbhagwat, pp. 2-31)

Even if you have to look at your dharma (duty), you should not hesitate to fight as the basic duty of the martial race is to fight for the righteous and there is nothing more important than that.

Be bothered of your assignment - In the battlefield, there are different kinds of assignments given to different sets of people. All assignments are unique in their respect and are distributed among the people as per their abilities and acumen. In the battlefield, every assigned work to individuals must be carried out effectively and efficiently without being concerned about activities that are not assigned to him. If every assignment is performed in its best form, the battle no more remains invincible.

Warfare from time immemorial has been manifested in many forms. In the pre-historic times it was more for the control of resources resulting into ground fights for supremacy. As the techniques and horizons evolved, the deployment of varied strategies and tools came to the fore. The resources for the battlefield ranged from the surface to air to water and then to space and finally in the abstract domains of cyber. The unique abilities of commanders to mix and utilize the resources available in these realms in proper proportions and timely utilization resulted into more complex warring behaviors.

The earliest forms of warfare mainly deployed resources on ground such as the ground forces in the form of trained military, which later included the resources in air as well as on sea in the form of air assets and water assets of higher endurances. The mobility of equipment from one location to the other during

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war also became significantly fast and therefore had definite effect on shifting locus of war zone from one location to another very swiftly. Space assets began to realize importance in the last forty to fifty years when quest to weaponize the space became one of the glaring challenges for many advanced nations. The nature of the domain being symmetric and was heavily dependent on the scientific knowhow, investments as well as the strategic positioning of the nation state, the domain was open only to select few and others had entry barriers in this realm of warfare.

The military commanders had by this time begun to realize the importance of joint commands where all the realms could combine their respective strengths to give a synergic effect to the outcome of a war. Several joint commands were set up in different countries in order to augment their resources together to have decisive edge over their adversaries. The space assets were utilized for identifying the position of their adversary as well as keep a watch on the communication that could be of strategic advantage to them. This led to a completely new domain of warfare where eyes and ears of the nation states got extended in space and could provide actionable intelligence in the real time about the adversary.

A famous quote from Mao Zedong –

“In order to win victory we must try our best to seal the eyes and the ears of the enemy, making him blind and deaf, and to create confusion in the minds of enemy commands, driving them insane.” (Zedong, 1949)

This was the time when electromagnetic spectrum were used and misused for the advantage of the nation states. Space added a new flavor to such operations. Satellites positioned in the orbit were equipped to take sub meter resolution pictures of areas of their interest and were in a position to feed in directly to the ground stations in real time thereby spelling out the positioning of the enemy assets on ground. Later, the communication satellites were also in a position to intercept radio and other communications off any area and position on the globe.

Now, the strengths of the space, integrated with the real time battle assessment techniques and fusing of information obtained through several channels including human intelligence provided a fairly intelligent situational awareness

to the nation state and therefore a realistic assessment led to increased lethality. These aspects of warfare theories as yet were more symmetric in nature and therefore were useful in determining the balance of power at the global levels.

The advent of cyber came as a completely new dynamics of warfare. The pros of adopting cyber surpassed the cons of such adoption and therefore more and more nations gradually shifted their infrastructure based services from the physical domain to the virtual domains. The critical information infrastructure began to be relied upon for citizen based services and its resilience became one of the important factors of governance. The global market opening up to the market driven global village began to see the utilization of the networked resources primarily relying on the connected networks which later on graduated to the cloud based infrastructure etc.

The famous treatise of war – the Art of War by Sun Tzu states –

“..now the reason the enlightened prince and the wise general conquer the enemy whenever they move and their achievements surpass those ordinary men is – foreknowledge.” (Tzu, 475-221 BC)

Foreknowledge or in the current parlance Intelligence was considered to be the most important factor in ensuring a win without fighting. All the platforms of warfare

There was yet another shift in paradigm where the cyber might could affect the health of a nation more than the military might. The loss of business and disruption in utility and infrastructural services could inflict greater damage than even the conventional methods. Economic Warfare, Currency Manipulations as well as Payment systems therefore became the instruments and platforms for creating effect in the warfare zone. The 4D's – Disruption, Denial, Degradation and Destruction of key assets became important consideration for any warfare strategies across the globe. The platforms began to be used and misused for asymmetric gains and combination of platforms and tools became even more disruptive.

The next big change in the game of asymmetries came in the form of social media and its wide usage. The platform permeated into the cognitive as well as the non-cognitive domains where many of the facts could be empirically

verified, however the majority of it remained unverified and devoid of logical deduction. The swiftness and the fast mobility and spread of information through these platforms made it almost impossible to rely on the empirical information and factual knowledge as it was impossible to verify the same using available methods in the limited time. Also, to add complications in the matter, the spread of information whether right or deep fake is geometric thereby making the search engines pick and assign higher grading to such deep fakes leaving the right information behind several pages in the search list. Computer Vision was yet another game changer in the domain of cyber. On one hand it was to produce a great enablement to the systems at large, on the other hand it proved to be a great weapon of war. The ease with which the machines could be trained and made to learn and create text, context as well as pictures and videos, the scenario became all the more difficult to paint. While the issues of fakes and the deep fakes are still catching the attention of most law enforcement agencies today, the technical aspects of the same is already being deployed as a part of the media toolkit for strategic warfare in the hybridized domain of warfare.

Over the period of time, the zones of warfare – the land, sea, water, space and cyber have now matured to a great deal. While the conventional weapons are being innovated on a day to day basis by arms producing states, the non-conventional weapons of war such as the information domain is watching the weaponization by large and small states and non-state actors on an hourly basis. The uncontrolled and no entry barriers have led this domain of warfare available to all and sundry making it more complex than ever before.

Hybrid warfare is not a new word coined in the dictionary of warfare. The ancient epics like Shri Mad have references to each of these forms of warfare including some of the abstract domains of occult and Tantras which is yet to find place in the modern methods subscribed in the hybrid warfare of today's world. The basis tenets of warfare has been beautifully not only illustrated but also exhibited in multiple stories of war including intelligence gathering, diplomacy, misinformation, virtualization, worship, strategic weapons and many such aspects that have only manifested itself now in technical terms, however all the aspects do have reference to our rich historical heritage.

(h) Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Warfare

Each of these sub-components of the hybrid warfare are a realm in itself however a short description of these forms of warfare are given below –

Conventional Warfare – Conventional Warfare comprises of the traditional methods of warfare that involves engagement of military powers in the air, sea, land and space. Foreknowledge plays an important role in this form of warfare and are normally extracted through COMINT (Communication Intelligence), HUMINT(Human Intelligence), IMINT(Image Intelligence), ELINT(Electronic Intelligence). Different technical as well as non-technical methods are deployed to glean information about the adversary in order to gain significant strategic advantage over the adversary. Sophisticated weapons and military might are the single most important denominator for a decisive win in this form of battle.

Economic Warfare – While most nations in the bi-polar world focus their attention on the well being of their population, the major agenda of governance remains economic prosperity of the nation state. In order to attain a state of economic dominance, the nation states try and exploit their resources both natural as well as artificial in the optimum and efficient way. The advent of a global economic village and opening up of the global markets have led to the exchange of goods and services across the globe with much ease and therefore the cross currency trades and a favorable balance of trade becomes one of the target for welfare states. Having an ability to influence the economic processes of ones adversary therefore has become one of the most potent weapon of warfare. Share markets, banking sectors, money market, interest rates are now closely related to the well being of the nation state and therefore any method to disturb the balance is counter productive for the state.

Diplomatic Warfare – Diplomatic warfare is a form of warfare where global influence plays a major and decisive role. This form of warfare relies its effect on the diplomatic underpinnings and exploits the relationship with friendly, neutral and hostile nations by deploying the right mix of techniques and strategies. Sanctions and trade barriers act as a potent tool for such diplomatic warfare.

Information Warfare – Information Warfare in the current times has gained enormous traction. The domain of information has a special ability to reach every nook and corner of the world with a click of a button. Also, since the utility services, essential services, and other critical information infrastructure heavily rely on the deployment of information technology and communication networks, the destruction, denial, degradation and disruption can cause heavy damages to the nation state sometimes may even effect the continuity of the government. Information warfare has another attribute of being available at all times without geographical boundaries. The asymmetric nature of this domain does not distinguish or debar non-state actors from participating in the battle.

Wikipedia defines asymmetric warfare as –

“ a type of war between belligerents whose relative military power, strategy or tactics differ significantly. This type of warfare often, but not necessarily, involves insurgents or resistance movement militias who may have the status of unlawful combatants against a standing army”. (contributors, 2024)

Psychological Warfare – Perception in the current global dynamics play a great role in winning or losing the battle. Social media acts as an excellent tool of such forms of warfare where technological enablement help create information that builds or destroys perception thereby causing psychological pressure in the minds of the adversary.

Spiritual Warfare – Spiritual warfare is a very old form of warfare that was in historic times practiced by the Christians in the form of occult and spirits. The super natural forms of beings were made to influence the direction of the war. It was slated to create influence in the minds of people and aspects such as black magic, tantras as well as spiritual practices gained significance. This form of warfare once again has started to gain momentum in the current world order though behind the curtains at the moment.

Space Warfare – With several nations breaching the earth gravitation have reached the outer space and have also positioned their technical assets in space. These technical assets are in the form of sensors that are capable of providing communication links but at the same time have extra ordinary advantages in terms of intercepting the communication from space to mapping the landscape of the globe. The real time sub-resolution pictures and videos are helpful in

identifying assets and give out a great deal of information to the advantage of the nation using this form of warfare. Also, weaponization of the space and destroying assets in the outer space would have significant effect on the future warfare dynamics.

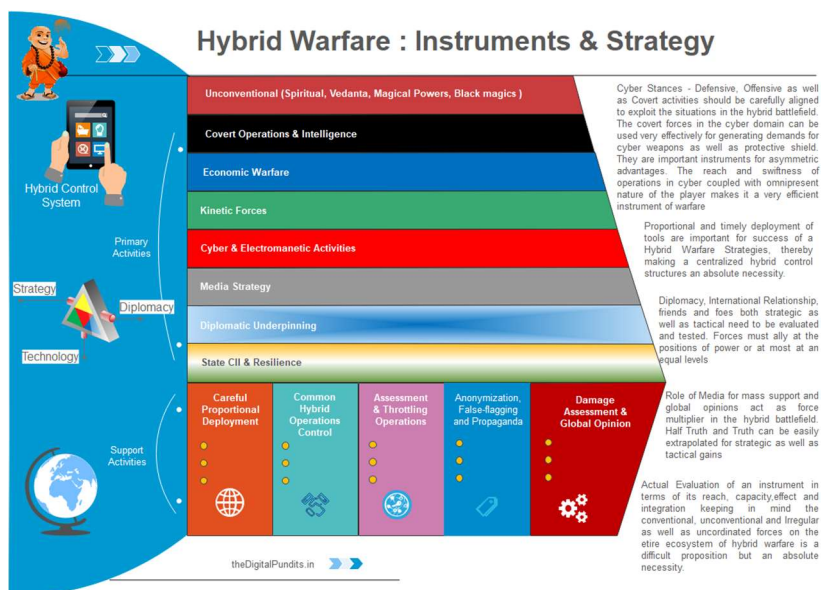
Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Warfare – This form of warfare is more strategic in nature and has long term consequence on the human survival on the mother earth. Normally, such forms of warfare are restricted by the theory of no-first use, however provocations may lead to a devastating effect of this form of warfare. The outbreak of COVID 19 though is controversial but some argue that it is the first wave of a biological warfare tested by some nation states.

Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Warfare – The deployment of machines and robotics with special abilities and trained brain set is yet another challenge. The robots capable of making human like decisions aided with super intelligence, machine learning algorithms and in some cases self learning algorithms are sure to find deployment in military strategies. The terminator kind of weaponized robots are no more a figment of fiction but is a reality today.

While each of the sub-components of hybrid warfare are lethal in their cause and effect, the situation would further become more complex when smart and able military commanders and the political bureaucracy would mix and match, the components with varying magnitude and create a warfare toolkit with effective and efficient management of war. All the aspects would be adequately chosen, deployed at the right time in right proportions and then using technology the flags would be raised to cover up and deflect the cause else where.

Ancient epic Shri Mad Bhagwad has very clearly defined the different tenets of a hybrid warfare. It on one hand mentions the importance of a situational awareness for battlefield assessment where Dhritarashtra (Dhritarashtra was the king of the Kuru kingdom, with its capital at Hastinapura. He was born

blind, which some interpret as a symbol of his flawed judgement. He fathered one hundred sons, known as the Kauravas, with his wife Gandhari. His eldest son, Duryodhana, played a pivotal role in the conflict with the Pandavas) takes the first hand stock of the battle field through Sanjay, it talks of the basics of war such as – know your enemy, know your strength, assess the strike capability of your enemy, understand the enemy’s strategies, plan your strategy, identify vulnerabilities of your enemy, timely exploitation of the vulnerability and many such aspects so important for the winning of the war.



A quote from Shrimad -

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय । सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ 2-48 ॥ (Shri Madbhagwat, pp. 2-48)

Performing Yoga is about doing your duties and not have attachments with success or failure. When success and failure are equipoised, this is what is called Equanimous Yoga.

Performance over Results - This is the verse where principles of Karma are defined. It says that the action must be the sole activity in a battlefield, the thought of the result of the battle front must be in the back of the mind and should not be the primary one. If all the positioned assets determined to perform their respective parts of the activity in the battle field just do their jobs optimally, the results of the war would automatically follow. Therefore, a war commander must instill a sense of action in the forces and strive to optimally position his assets in the battlefield with specific jobs and identified tasks including benchmarks of performance.

Conclusion

Hybrid warfare is a mix of the conventional, unconventional, stereotypical, non-stereotypical, regular and irregular form of warfare where the actors come not only from the state but non-state actors too play a major role. The domain of warfare is not just the physical space but can be waged in the abstract domains of cyber, psychology and occult. The permeation of this form of warfare in the cognitive as well as non-cognitive domains make it potent and lethal in its effect.

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पर्यटन कूटनीति और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंध

डॉ. अंशुल उपाध्याय*

सारांश

आज हमारी दुनिया युद्ध, धार्मिक संघर्ष, बीमारी और पलायन जैसे संकटों से जूझ रही है। इसलिए, राष्ट्रों या लोगों के बीच राजनीतिक अशांति या संघर्ष को खत्म करने या कम करने के लिए अंतरराष्ट्रीय वार्ता का एक नया पैटर्न स्थापित करने की सख्त जरूरत है। वास्तव में, यह धारणा कि पर्यटन अंतर-सांस्कृतिक समझ और सहिष्णुता को बढ़ावा दे सकता है, ने लंबे समय से पर्यटन को शांति के मार्ग के रूप में कूटनीतिक प्रवचन का आधार बनाया है। पर्यटन कूटनीति आधिकारिक स्तर पर शुरू हुई और अर्ध-आधिकारिक और नागरिक समूहों तक फैल गई। गैर-पारंपरिक कूटनीति (सार्वजनिक कूटनीति) के रूप में, कूटनीति के अर्ध-आधिकारिक और नागरिक स्तर आज के अंतरराष्ट्रीय क्षेत्र में तेजी से महत्वपूर्ण हो गए हैं; परिणामस्वरूप, कई अध्ययनों ने आधिकारिक पर्यटन कूटनीति को नजरअंदाज करते हुए केवल सार्वजनिक कूटनीति पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया है। पर अब पर्यटन कूटनीति के कार्य अधिक विविध हो गए हैं क्योंकि इसकी गहराई और चौड़ाई बढ़ी है। यह विविधता अंतराल को पाटने और गठबंधनों को मजबूत करने, अर्थव्यवस्था और नव-उपनिवेशवाद को बढ़ावा देने, सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान और छवि निर्माण, और कूटनीतिक प्रतिशोध और समझ में सबसे अधिक दिखाई देती है।

आज पर्यटन दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा उद्योग बन गया है, जिसमें 2019 में दुनिया भर में अंतर्राष्ट्रीय पर्यटकों के आगमन (रात भर के आगंतुक) में 4% की वृद्धि हुई है, जो 1.5 बिलियन तक पहुँच गया। इसलिए किसी देश की सार्वजनिक छवि को आकार देने में पर्यटन द्वारा निभाई जा सकने वाली भूमिका को पहचानने की और, विषय वस्तु पर

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अधिक अंतर्दृष्टि रखने के साथ-साथ भविष्य में पर्यटन के विषय में गहन समझ के लिए कदम बढ़ाना अब अति आवश्यक हो गया है।

पर्यटन कूटनीति क्या है?

आज के वैज्ञानिक युग में कोई देश अलग-अलग नहीं रह सकता। इन देशों में पारस्परिक सम्बन्ध जोड़ना आज के युग में आवश्यक हो गया है। इन सम्बन्धों को जोड़ने के लिए योग्य व्यक्ति एक देश से दूसरे देश में भेजे जाते हैं। ये व्यक्ति अपनी योग्यता, कुशलता और कूटनीति से दूसरे देश को प्रायः मित्र बना लेते हैं। अतः, “पर्यटन कूटनीति पर्यटन संसाधनों को बढ़ावा देना और दो या दो से अधिक देशों के बीच या पर्यटन की सॉफ्ट पावर का उपयोग करके देशों के बीच शांतिपूर्ण बातचीत के माध्यम से किसी विशिष्ट गंतव्य के संकट या समस्या को हल करना है।”

प्राचीन काल में भी एक राज्य दूसरे राज्य से कूटनीतिक सम्बन्ध जोड़ने के लिए अपने कूटनीतिज्ञ भेजता था। पहले कूटनीति का अर्थ 'सौदे में या लेन देन में वाक्य चातुरी, छल-प्रपंच, धोखा-धड़ी' लगाया जाता था। जो व्यक्ति कम मूल्य देकर अधिकाधिक लाभ अपने देश के लिए प्राप्त करता था, कुशल कूटनीतिज्ञ कहलाता था। परन्तु आज छल-प्रपंच को कूटनीति नहीं कहा जाता है। वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि से आधुनिक काल में इस शब्द का प्रयोग दो राज्यों में शान्तिपूर्ण समझौते के लिए किया जाता है। डिप्लोमेसी के लिए हिन्दी में कूटनीति के स्थान पर राजनय शब्द का प्रयोग होने लगा है। अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय जगत एक परिवार के समान बन गया है। परिवार के सदस्यों में प्रेम, सहयोग, सद्भावना तथा मित्रता का सम्बन्ध जोड़ना एक कुशल राजनयज्ञ का काम है।

पर्यटन कूटनीति का अंतरराष्ट्रीय संबंधों पर सकारात्मक प्रभाव

सांस्कृतिक विनियमन

पर्यटन से राष्ट्रों को संस्कृतियों को समझने और आदान-प्रदान करने में मदद मिल सकती है, जिससे राजनयिक संबंधों में सुधार हो सकता है।

राजनीतिक गतिशीलता

पर्यटन राजनीतिक मामलों को आकार दे सकता है और राजनीतिक गतिशीलता को सामने लाने में सक्षम बना सकता है।

सार्वजनिक कूटनीति

पर्यटन सार्वजनिक कूटनीति और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय विकास को बेहतर बनाने का एक साधन हो सकता है।

आर्थिक विकास

पर्यटन देशों के लिए राजस्व का एक प्रमुख स्रोत हो सकता है, जिससे आर्थिक विकास और राजनीतिक स्थिरता आ सकती है।

वैश्विक चुनौतियों का प्रत्युत्तर

पर्यटन वैश्विक चुनौतियों और आतंकवाद का एक शक्तिशाली जवाब हो सकता है।

समावेशी राजनीतिक आचरण

इसके साथ साथ पर्यटन से रोज़गार के अवसर पैदा होते हैं। पर्यटन से जुड़े सेवा उद्योगों में परिवहन, होटल, मनोरंजन, और रिज़ॉर्ट जैसे क्षेत्र शामिल हैं। पर्यटन से जुड़े स्वास्थ्य जोखिम, जैसे संक्रामक रोगों का प्रसार, पर्यटकों के प्रवाह को प्रभावित करते हैं। पर्यटन से जुड़े पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव, जैसे मिट्टी का कटाव, प्रदूषण, प्राकृतिक आवास का नुकसान, और लुप्तप्राय प्रजातियों पर दबाव, पर्यटन स्थलों पर पड़ते हैं।

वर्तमान समय में भारत के पड़ोसी देशों की पर्यटन कूटनीति-

चीन की नेपाल को लुभाने की पर्यटन कूटनीति-

2015 में चीनी सरकार के एक प्रस्ताव के बाद पर्यटन उद्योग एक स्वतंत्र आधिकारिक अवधारणा के रूप में उभरा। वर्तमान में, चीन और विदेशों में अधिकांश शोध पर्यटन कूटनीति पर ध्यान केंद्रित करते हैं, जो क्रॉस-सांस्कृतिक संचार और राष्ट्रीय छवि को बढ़ावा देने के लिए सार्वजनिक कूटनीति के रूप में है

कोविड-19 महामारी से पहले, भारत के बाद चीन नेपाल के लिए दूसरा सबसे बड़ा पर्यटक बाजार था। महामारी के बाद चीन द्वारा अपनी भूमि और हवाई सीमाओं को यात्रा के लिए फिर से खोलने के बाद, नेपाल के पर्यटन उद्योग को चीनी पर्यटकों की संख्या में वृद्धि की उम्मीद थी। पर नेपाल को बेल्ट एंड रोड इनिशिएटिव (BRI) परियोजनाओं के लिए सहमत कराने के चीन के प्रयास में कोई प्रगति नहीं होने के कारण, बीजिंग अब हिमालयी राष्ट्र को लुभाने के लिए पर्यटन कूटनीति का सहारा ले रहा है।

नेपाल को लुभाने के लिए चीन ने घोषणा की है कि वह वर्ष 2025 को 'नेपाल भ्रमण वर्ष' घोषित करेगा। इस घोषणा ने, नेपाली अधिकारियों को आश्चर्यचकित कर दिया। कोई भी याद नहीं कर सकता कि चीन ने आखिरी बार अपने नागरिकों के बीच किसी एक देश को पर्यटन स्थल के रूप में कब बढ़ावा दिया हो। सच तो यह है कि भले ही चीन की घोषणा के कारण चीनी पर्यटकों की संख्या बढ़ जाए, लेकिन नेपाल के पर्यटन बाजार में भारतीयों का दबदबा बना रहेगा।

नेपाल ने हिमालयी राष्ट्र में बीआरआई परियोजनाओं के लिए बीजिंग द्वारा वित्त पोषण के लिए चीन की शर्तों पर अभी तक सहमति नहीं जताई है। काठमांडू उच्च ब्याज दरों वाले ऋणों को चुकाने के बजाय बीजिंग से अनुदान और वित्तीय सहायता को प्राथमिकता देता है। नेपाल अपने निकटतम पड़ोस में बीआरआई परियोजनाओं को लेकर भारत की चिंताओं को भी समझता है। भारत नेपाल के माध्यम से कुछ नियोजित बीआरआई बुनियादी ढांचे के गलियारों को विवादित क्षेत्र में अतिक्रमण के रूप में देखता है, जिस पर उसका दावा है कि नेपाल चीन के साथ भारत की प्रतिद्वंद्विता में पक्ष लेने के द्वारा अपने शक्तिशाली पड़ोसी भारत के साथ संबंधों को खराब होने से बचना चाहता है।

आव्रजन विभाग द्वारा उपलब्ध कराए गए आंकड़ों का हवाला देते हुए, काठमांडू पोस्ट ने बताया कि, '2023 में केवल 60,878 चीनी पर्यटक नेपाल आए। इसके विपरीत, नेपाल आने वाले भारतीय पर्यटकों की संख्या 319,936 के सर्वकालिक उच्च स्तर पर पहुंच गई। केवल वे भारतीय पर्यटक ही पर्यटक माने जाते हैं जो नेपाल की हवाई यात्रा करते हैं। हालांकि, चीन की घोषणा ने नेपाल पर्यटन उद्योग के हितधारकों को उत्साहित कर दिया है। पर्यटन नेपाल का सबसे बड़ा उद्योग है और विदेशी मुद्रा और राजस्व

का सबसे बड़ा स्रोत है। दुनिया के 10 सबसे ऊंचे पहाड़ों में से आठ का घर, नेपाल पर्वतारोहियों, रॉक क्लाइम्बर्स और रोमांच चाहने वालों के लिए एक गंतव्य है। नेपाल की हिंदू और बौद्ध विरासत और इसका ठंडा मौसम भी मजबूत आकर्षण हैं। पर्यटन से नेपाल को सालाना 471 मिलियन डॉलर की आय होती है। हालांकि, 2015 में विनाशकारी हिमालयी भूकंप के बाद नेपाल का पर्यटन उद्योग प्रभावित हुआ था, जिसके बाद भूकंप की एक श्रृंखला 2020 में आई व नेपाल में पर्यटन क्षेत्र COVID-19 महामारी के कारण ध्वस्त हो गया। महामारी के खत्म होने के बाद, यह भारतीय पर्यटक ही हैं जिन्होंने नेपाल के पर्यटन उद्योग को धीरे-धीरे उबरने में मदद की है। नायक के अनुसार, चीन की पर्यटन कूटनीति के बावजूद, यह भारतीय पर्यटक ही होंगे जो नेपाल के पर्यटन बाजार पर हावी रहेंगे।

पाकिस्तान की अंतरराष्ट्रीय पर्यटकों को लुभाने की पर्यटन कूटनीति

पाकिस्तान लंबे समय से अपनी खराब विदेश नीति और विरोधियों के घिनौने दुष्प्रचार के कारण वैश्विक स्तर पर नकारात्मक छवि का शिकार रहा है। इसके बावजूद पाकिस्तान पुरातात्विक, ऐतिहासिक और सांस्कृतिक रूप से समृद्ध और संपन्न देश है और विविध संस्कृतियों का घर है। यह मन को झकझोर देने वाली भौगोलिक परिदृश्यों वाली सबसे जादुई भूमि है, हमारे पास समुद्र, नदियाँ, झीलें, पहाड़, रेगिस्तान, ठंडे रेगिस्तान और देखने के लिए कई तरह के मौसम हैं। हमारे पास दुनिया की सबसे बड़ी तीन पर्वत श्रृंखलाओं सहित सबसे बड़ी पर्वत प्रणालियाँ हैं, जिनमें ग्लेशियरों का प्रतिशत दुनिया में सबसे अधिक है। हमारे पास सिंध में मोहनजोदड़ो, पंजाब में हड़प्पा और बलूचिस्तान में मेहरगढ़ के रूप में पृथ्वी पर सबसे प्राचीन सभ्यता है। देश के विभिन्न हिस्सों में बौद्ध धर्म, हिंदू धर्म, सिख धर्म और सूफीवाद के खंडहरों के रूप में हमारे पास महान सांस्कृतिक- धार्मिक विरासत है इसके अलावा, हमारे पास सभी प्रांतों में सैकड़ों रंग-बिरंगी संस्कृतियाँ हैं, और अंतिम लेकिन सबसे महत्वपूर्ण बात, हमारे पास सबसे खूबसूरत लोग हैं जो अपनी अनूठी भूमि को आगंतुकों के साथ साझा करना चाहते हैं। ये सब कहना पाकिस्तान की अंतरराष्ट्रीय पर्यटकों को लुभाने की मात्र एक चाल है। जबकि वास्तविकता में पाकिस्तान के पास दुनिया को देने के लिए आतंकवाद के शिव और कुछ नहीं है।

बांग्लादेश की अंतरराष्ट्रीय पर्यटकों को लुभाने की पर्यटन कूटनीति

बांग्लादेश के आतिथ्य उद्योग अपने संभावित मेहमानों से सीधे संपर्क करते हैं और यात्रा एजेंसी, टूर ऑपरेटर, प्रिंट मीडिया, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक मीडिया, सोशल मीडिया या अपनी आधिकारिक वेबसाइट के माध्यम से पर्यटकों के साथ संपर्क करते हैं। वे गंतव्य और विशेष सुविधाओं के ऑफर्स के बारे में प्रमुख जानकारी प्रदान करते हैं ताकि पर्यटक देश का दौरा करने के लिए आकर्षित हों। इस प्रकार, आतिथ्य उद्योग पर्यटकों के साथ संवाद करता है और उन्हें जानकारी प्रदान करता है। पर्यटक एक गंतव्य पर जाने से पहले आवास, परिवहन, भोजन और पेय, और अन्य सुविधाओं की जानकारी खोजते हैं। वे यह जानकारी वेबसाइट, दोस्तों और परिवार, समाचार पत्र, यात्रा एजेंसियों या आतिथ्य उद्योग से सीधी बातचीत के माध्यम से प्राप्त करते हैं। बांग्लादेश में कुछ प्रसिद्ध होटल हैं जैसे, कि रैडिसन ब्लू वाटर गार्डन, वेस्टिन, पैन पैसिफिक सोनारगांव आदि। ये आतिथ्य उद्योग सीधे स्थानीय लोगों को भर्ती करते हैं क्योंकि स्थानीय लोग गंतव्य के बारे में उद्योग के लोगों की तुलना में अधिक जानकारी रखते हैं। इस प्रकार, वे पर्यटकों को गंतव्य या देश भर में पर्यटन संसाधनों के बारे में सुझाव दे सकते हैं।

बांग्लादेश एयरलाइंस पर्यटकों के लिए एक विशेष अवधि के लिए 20% - 50% छूट प्रदान करती है। यह ऑफर समृद्ध और बजट पर्यटकों दोनों को हवाई यात्रा के लिए प्रेरित करता है। इस रणनीति से पर्यटन उद्योग को अधिक पर्यटकों को आकर्षित करने और देश को प्रमोट करने में मदद करती है।

श्रीलंका की पर्यटकों को लुभाने की पर्यटन कूटनीति

श्रीलंका 22 मिलियन लोगों की जनसंख्या वाला देश है। जो अपने समुद्र तटों, प्राचीन मंदिरों और सुगंधित चाय के लिए प्रसिद्ध है। श्री लंका ने पहले COVID-19 महामारी और फिर 2022 में गंभीर वित्तीय संकट का सामना किया था, जिसके चलते वहाँ व्यापक पैमाने पर प्रदर्शन और ईंधन जैसे आवश्यक वस्तुओं की कमी देखी गई थी। श्रीलंका के मंत्रिमंडल ने चीन, भारत और रूस सहित 35 देशों के पर्यटकों को मुफ्त वीजा जारी करने की मंजूरी दे दी है। यह कदम पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देने और संकटग्रस्त अर्थव्यवस्था को पुनर्जीवित करने के प्रयास के तहत उठाया गया है। पर्यटकों को 30 दिनों के वीजा

प्रदान किए जाएंगे, जो 1 अक्टूबर से शुरू होने वाले छह महीने के पायलट प्रोग्राम के तहत दिए जा रहे हैं। इस विस्तृत सूची में भारत, चीन, ब्रिटेन, जर्मनी, नीदरलैंड, बेल्जियम, स्पेन, ऑस्ट्रेलिया, डेनमार्क, पोलैंड, कजाकिस्तान, सऊदी अरब, UAE, नेपाल, इंडोनेशिया, रूस, थाईलैंड, मलेशिया, जापान और फ्रांस शामिल हैं।

हालांकि, पिछले साल से श्रीलंका के पर्यटन उद्योग ने सुधार का लाभ उठाना शुरू किया है, और श्रीलंका ने अगस्त के मध्य तक लगभग 2 मिलियन आगमन दर्ज किए, जो 2019 के बाद पहली बार हुआ है। श्रीलंका डेवलपमेंट अथॉरिटी के नवीनतम आंकड़ों के अनुसार, भारत 246,922 आगमन के साथ पर्यटकों का सबसे बड़ा स्रोत बना हुआ है, जबकि ब्रिटेन 123,992 आगमन के साथ दूसरे स्थान पर है। केन्द्रीय बैंक के अनुसार, श्रीलंका ने 2024 की पहली छमाही में पर्यटन से \$1.5 बिलियन की कमाई की, जो पिछले वर्ष की इसी अवधि में \$875 मिलियन थी।

पर्यटन कूटनीति से अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर भारत की छवि

भारत की भौगोलिक विविधता, संस्कृति, परंपरा, और दीर्घकालिक धरोहर इसे एक अद्वितीय पर्यटन स्थल बनाती है। भारतीय संस्कृति और धरोहरों की झलक दक्षिण पूर्व एशियाई देशों में लगभग हर जगह देखी जा सकती है। भारत के पुरातन मंदिर जिस जिस शैली में बनाए जाते थे, उसी शैली में दक्षिण पूर्व एशियाई देशों में खुदाई के दौरान शिवलिंग, विष्णु मूर्ति, गरुड़ की मूर्ति, आदि प्राप्त हुए हैं। जिससे यह सिद्ध होता है कि, भारत की भौगोलिक विविधता संस्कृति परंपरा का दक्षिण पूर्वी एशिया देशों के साथ गहरा संबंध है, अतः कुछ केंद्रीय एशियाई देश हमारे इतिहास को भी सांझा करते हैं। वह हमारे इतिहास का महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा है। उदाहरण के लिए गिरमिटिया जैसे समुदाय जिन्हें उपनिवेश वीडियो द्वारा ले जाया गया और बागान क्षेत्र में काम करने के लिए मजबूर कर दिया गया यह दर्शाते हैं की, स्वतंत्रता और मजबूत सांस्कृतिक पहचान के अभाव में एक व्यक्ति को किस प्रकार से उसकी जड़ों से उखाड़ कर संस्कृति आघात का सामना करने के लिए मजबूर कर दिया जाता है।

वर्तमान में उत्तराखंड देवभूमि लक्षद्वीप और अरुणाचल प्रदेश में भारतीय संस्कृति और पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देने के लिए राजनायकों ने महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है। भारत एक सॉफ्ट पावर के रूप में कार्य कर सकता है और देश की आर्थिक वृद्धि को बढ़ाने

के लिए विशाल अवसर प्रदान करता है। उदाहरण के लिए सारनाथ, बोधगया, वैशाली और नालंदा जैसे बौद्ध पर्यटन स्थल बौद्ध धर्म के अंगों के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण हैं। आंतरिक संबंधों के दृष्टिकोण से यह स्थल दक्षिण पूर्व एशियाई देशों और बौद्ध समुदायों के साथ सांस्कृतिक संबंधों को मजबूत करने के लिए नोडल बिंदुओं के रूप में कार्य कर सकते हैं। आज भारत को विश्व में योग गुरु के नाम से भी पहचाना जाता है भारत के बहुत से गुरु अन्य देशों में भी योग और प्राणायाम का प्रचार करते हैं। जिनमें सद्गुरु, श्री श्री रविशंकर जी, बाबा रामदेव आदि शामिल हैं। एक तरीके से यह भी भारत की संस्कृति की ओर विदेशी पर्यटकों का ध्यान आकर्षित करते हैं।

भारतीय संस्कृति अपने आप में अत्यंत महान है इसका विस्तार उत्तर में हिमालय के नीचे से दक्षिण में समुद्र के ऊपर के लगभग सभी क्षेत्रों में रहा है। वर्तमान समय में दक्षिण पूर्व एशिया क्षेत्र के लगभग हर देश के साथ भारत के मधुर संबंधों का होना उसकी सांस्कृतिक एकता की पहचान है, अतः आज अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर भारत की छवि एक विकासशील देश के रूप में विकसित हुई है, और विकसित भारत होने तक के सफर के लिए भारत में अब अंतराष्ट्रीय संबंधों और राजनयिकता के संदर्भ में पर्यटन के विचार को फिर से परिभाषित करने की आवश्यकता है। जिससे अन्य देशों के लोगों को भारत में आकर यहां की वास्तविक संस्कृति से परिचित कराया जा सके और उनके मन में पाकिस्तान जैसे देशों ने जो भ्रम पैदा कर दिए हैं उनसे छुटकारा दिलाया जा सके।

चर्चा

वर्तमान परिवेश में जब एक दूसरे एक देश से दूसरे देश में आवागमन करने के लिए कोई सीमा अब रही नहीं हवाई यात्रा के द्वारा आसानी से आप एक जगह से दूसरी जगह पहुंच सकते हैं ऐसे समय में विभिन्न देश अपने देश में दूसरे देश के नागरिकों को पर्यटक के रूप में आने की परमिशन देते हैं और ऐसा करने पर जब अन्य देश के लोग आपके यहां आते हैं तो वह जहां भी घूमते हैं जिन स्थानों को देखते हैं और जहां निवास करते हैं जहां पर भोजन करते हैं इन सब में जो भी पैसा वह लगाते हैं, वह कहीं ना कहीं आपकी अर्थव्यवस्था को सपोर्ट करता है। एक तरीके से विभिन्न राष्ट्र के देशों को अपने यहां लोगों को बुलाने और उनके द्वारा किए गए अच्छे खासे खर्च से अपने देश के

अर्थव्यवस्था में मदद करने का यह पूरा काम कूटनीतिक चाल ही है, जिससे एक तरीके से मेज़बान देश को फायदा ही होता है। पर्यटन सांस्कृतिक, सौंदर्यात्मक, और ऐतिहासिक तत्वों का उपयोग करके अन्य देशों को आकर्षित और प्रभावित करता है। उदाहरण के लिए, भारत योग को एक कूटनीतिक उपकरण के रूप में उपयोग करता है ताकि अपनी सौम्य शक्ति को बढ़ाया जा सके और अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर अपनी स्थिति को मजबूत किया जा सके। सरकार सांस्कृतिक धरोहर के संरक्षण को पुनर्जीवित करती है और भारतीय सांस्कृतिक कूटनीति को बढ़ावा देती है। सांस्कृतिक क्षेत्र के आर्थिक मूल्य को मान्यता देती है। यह दृष्टिकोण देश की वैश्विक प्रतिष्ठा को भी बढ़ाता है।

अंतर्राष्ट्रीय पर्यटन उन सबसे महत्वपूर्ण प्रकारों में से एक है जिनका विदेश मामलों के विभाग के निर्णयों के साथ महत्वपूर्ण, प्रत्यक्ष और अप्रत्यक्ष संबंध होता है; इसे विशिष्ट परिप्रेक्ष्यों में पर्यटन राजनयिकता के रूप में व्याख्यायित किया जाता है और यह पर्यटन उद्योग के अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंधों और प्लेटफार्मों को मार्गदर्शित, चैनलाइज और सुविधा प्रदान कर सकता है। इसलिए, देशों की जरूरतों, मौजूदा क्षमताओं, और प्रत्येक देश में अद्वितीय पर्यटन आकर्षणों की आवश्यकता को ध्यान में रखते हुए, यह अनिवार्य है कि विदेश मंत्री पर्यटन राजनयिकता के क्षेत्र में गहरे, सुरक्षित और विशेषज्ञ कदम उठाएं। पर्यटन के क्षेत्र में नई नौकरियों का सृजन बेरोजगारी की समस्या को हल करने और लोगों के बीच सामाजिक सक्रियता उत्पन्न करने में सहायक हो सकता है। उदाहरण के लिए, विशेषज्ञ निर्णय-निर्माण चुनौतियों को हल कर सकता है और राष्ट्रीय, अंतर्राष्ट्रीय और वैश्विक स्तर पर नए क्षितिज देख सकता है। पर्यटन के बुनियादी ढांचे को बदलकर और सशक्त बनाकर और पर्यटन कार्यक्रमों के कार्यान्वयन में लोगों की भूमिका को बढ़ाकर, या निजी क्षेत्र को शामिल करके और घरेलू और विदेशी निवेश को आकर्षित करके, मध्यस्थता के मामलों को कम करके, सरकारों की भूमिका और पर्यटन उद्योग में सीधी भागीदारी को घटा सकता है। पर्यटन केवल एक उद्योग नहीं है, बल्कि यह उद्योगों का एक समूह है जो पर्यटकों पर विभिन्न स्तरों पर निर्भरता अनुभव करता है, और यह निर्भरता समय और स्थान के साथ परिवर्तनशील होती है। इस बीच, पर्यटन विकास सभी आर्थिक, सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, सुरक्षा और नियामक और कानूनी क्षेत्रों के व्यवस्थित कार्यकरण से प्रभावित होता है। देशों की राजनयिक प्रणाली का पर्यटन के महत्वपूर्ण श्रेणी में अन्य संस्थानों और संगठनों के साथ एक विशिष्ट और विशिष्ट स्थान होता है।

पड़ोसी देशों और विश्व के विभिन्न हिस्सों में अन्य पर्यटन बाजारों के साथ भू-राजनीतिक संबंधों का निर्माण, सुधार, विकास और गहरा करना आर्थिक राजनयिकता के साथ-साथ विशेष रूप से पर्यटन उद्योग में क्षमता निर्माण की प्राथमिकताओं में गिना जाता है। अधिकांश देशों की आर्थिक राजनयिकता के क्षेत्र में पर्यटन पर जोर देने के साथ की गई गतिविधियाँ अब तक सफल नहीं रही हैं, और पर्यटन की संभावनाओं और वास्तविक क्षमताओं के संदर्भ में आदर्श बिंदु तक पहुँचने के लिए अभी भी लंबा रास्ता तय करना है।

निष्कर्ष

पर्यटन को अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंधों के संदर्भ में "अपने विरोधियों को मनाने का कौशल" कहा जाता है। पर्यटन नीतियां और अंतरराष्ट्रीय संबंध करीबी रूप से एक दूसरे के साथ जुड़े हुए हैं।

देशों के पर्यटन के प्रति दृष्टिकोण, जिसमें उनके बीजा नीतियां, विपणन रणनीतियां, और संकट प्रबंधन शामिल हैं, अन्य देशों के साथ उनके कूटनीतिक संबंधों पर महत्वपूर्ण प्रभाव डाल सकते हैं। जब पर्यटन को प्रभावी ढंग से प्रबंधित किया जाता है, तो यह आपसी समझ, आर्थिक सहयोग, और शांतिपूर्ण अंतरराष्ट्रीय संबंधों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए एक ताकत बन सकता है। सरकारी राजनीतिक निर्णय सीधे तौर पर यह निर्धारित करते हैं कि पर्यटन कैसे विकसित होता है। पर्यटन कूटनीति का उन्नयन और इसके अनुप्रयोग के परिणामस्वरूप पर्यटकों की आवक, रोजगार के अवसर, और आर्थिक समृद्धि हो सकती है, जिससे राष्ट्रीय आय में वृद्धि होती है और अंततः एक सुरक्षित और शांतिपूर्ण समाज की स्थापना होती है। राष्ट्रीय और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय घटनाओं (राष्ट्रीय और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन) के आयोजन से देश की पर्यटन क्षमताओं का सटीक और सैद्धांतिक रूप से परिचय कराने का अच्छा अवसर प्राप्त होता है। इसके अनुसार, विदेश मंत्री राजनयिक और अन्य देशों के दूतों को आमंत्रित कर सकते हैं ताकि राजनयिक और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय पर्यटन संबंधों को गहरा किया जा सके

भारत के सम्बन्ध में देखा जाए तो आज भारत को अपने दोगले पड़ोसीयो जैसे, चीन और पाकिस्तान से संभल कर रहने की जरूरत है। साथ ही अब भारत को अपनी विरासत को भी अपना नाम देना अति आवश्यक है। चुकी भारत का अस्तित्व तब से

है जब, पाकिस्तान का जन्म भी नहीं हुआ था। अतः अब पुनः भारत विश्व गुरु बनने के लिए जब अग्रसर हुआ है तो उसे अपने देश में अधिक से अधिक पर्यटकों को आकर्षित करना होगा। तभी भारत के वास्तविक प्रगतिमान चेहरे को विश्व के सम्मुख लाया जा सकेगा और हमारी प्राचीन सांस्कृतिक विरासतों को हमारे ही नाम से पहचाना जायेगा। इससे न केवल अन्य देशों के साथ हमारे अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सम्बन्धों में मधुरता आएगी वरन कुटिल पड़ोसियों के षड्यंत्र से भी अन्य देशों को बचने में मदद मिलेगी साथ ही साझा सांस्कृतिक स्मृतियों को पुनर्जीवित करने के कारण सांस्कृतिक संपत्तियों का विकास होगा और देश के लाखों लोगों के जीवन को भी बदला जा सकेगा।

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TOURISM DIPLOMACY: INDIA CHINA MALDIVES AND USE OF SOFT POWER

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Abstract

Various dimensions of diplomacy, such as tourism diplomacy, health diplomacy, diaspora diplomacy, public diplomacy, and terminology, are prevalent in current international politics, serving as components of soft power. Globalization, following the end of the Cold War, elevated trade to the forefront of international relations, displacing other disputes between countries and prioritizing economic interests. Essentially, following the conclusion of the Cold War, nearly every nation finds itself in a state of conflict, needing to prioritize economic interests over disputes, while simultaneously balancing security concerns through the application of soft power. The present research paper is an attempt to explore this element. An attempt has been made to conceptually analyse tourism diplomacy, explore its importance as a soft power component, and analyse it in relation to China, India, and the Maldives.

Keywords: China, India, Maldives, Soft power, Tourism diplomacy, outbound tourist.

Introduction

Aristotle, the father of political science, said that man is a political animal destined by nature for state life. Aristotle's assertions have proven to be timeless. The evolution of the modern state system has also demonstrated that man is suited for state life, specifically political life, with power and economics at the core of all human activities. Accordingly, in international politics, only two things are at the center of all states' activities: security and trade. If we see

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world politics since the Second World War, it becomes evident that security and trade have been the axis of international politics. During the Cold War period, international politics primarily focused on security, forming treaties and military alliances accordingly. After the Cold War, we enter the era of globalization, where security takes a backseat and trade becomes the primary concern. Due to globalization's free movement of services and products, the mediaeval boundaries of the nation-state and the concept of sovereignty have become irrelevant. The importance of rating agencies such as Moody's and Fitch, as well as any country's economic rating, has increased. Today's world is a political economy. Politics revolves around interstate economic activity. Money makes the world go round. And now the world appears to be spinning wildly out of control, escaping from its traditional orbit. (Jacob:2012) Like economic activities, the traditional boundaries of international politics have broken. Now, diplomacy is more than just the work of diplomats. Rather, the emergence of numerous non-traditional sources of diplomacy has proven to be more effective than traditional diplomacy in many cases. This context provides a clear understanding of tourism diplomacy. "Tourism is today the second largest item of world trade. It is a source of bitter controversy, yet a topic of intense regional collaboration in both international and sub-national politics. It is a policy area infused with the most optimistic projections and the most vitriolic criticism. This area is also largely overlooked by political science. Political science has neglected important aspects of tourism's political costs and advantages" (Richter: 1983) Quantitative changes lead to qualitative changes. Therefore, as the tourism industry expands and generates significant remittances to its host countries, it draws the interest of major economic powers, underscoring its strategic significance. This is even more important in the context of an expansionist state like China. Scholars have conducted modern studies (Fan, 2010, Tse, 2013, Chen & Duggan, 2016). They explain how China has developed its tourism diplomacy under the guise of investment and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and has successfully exported Chinese tourists, a development that has significant strategic implications. It has disturbed the balance of power in South Asia. As a result, this research paper aims to understand tourism diplomacy within the framework of China's

expansionism, especially considering India's recent relations with the Maldives.

Statement of the problem

In the 21st century, security dimensions have changed. The interconnection between security and economy is evident. Due to globalization, a dictatorial political system such as China gained a place in the World Trade Organization. As a result, China's rapid economic progress manifests both directly and indirectly in strategic and security matters. Thus, security questions are indirectly involved in China's investments and BRI plans. Tourism diplomacy is a tool for this. The rapidly increasing number of Chinese tourists in the Maldives and Sri Lanka is a testimony to the expansion of China's soft power in South Asia. This is disturbing the balance of power in the Indian Ocean region. The conceptual analysis becomes necessary for the study of tourism diplomacy as a soft power component.

Objectives of the study

- To explore the possibilities to conceptualize the term tourism diplomacy.
- To examine the role of tourism diplomacy in soft power.
- To examine Chinese expansionism through tourism diplomacy and its use as a foreign policy tool.
- To identify the importance of tourism diplomacy in South Asia and in India-Maldives relations in particular.

Review of literature

Our review of the literature focuses on examining three primary questions.

1. Understanding tourism diplomacy as a soft power component
2. China is increasing its outbound tourism and using tourism diplomacy as an expansion tool.

3. The India-Maldives relation and tourism diplomacy are countering the Chinese effort of hegemony in the Indian Ocean.

In the 21st century, the tourism industry is too big to ignore. (Richter: 1983) Superpowers used tourism diplomacy, which was of great importance even during the Cold War period. According to Sune B. P. and Elitza S. (2024), tourism diplomacy played a significant role during the Cold War period. The 21st century's evolving dimensions of diplomacy have led to the emergence of tourism as a new dimension, prompting attempts to explain its significance. According to Shelley B. and Lisa P. (2019), Tourism diplomacy has also been considered a tool for establishing peace. (Stuart E. L. & Donald E. H. (2009) Therefore, the absence of war has also been defined as peace. (Fabio Carbone: 2017) Tourism diplomacy has been considered a part of public court policy and soft power. Many studies present it as an essential component of soft power (Chen and Duggan 2014). It is believed that China uses tourism diplomacy as a soft power tool to expand its influence (Tse: 2013). The geography of the Maldives makes it a natural place for the tourism industry. (Brahim N. 2024) The Maldives is vital for Indian interests in the Indian Ocean, especially from a security and strategic point of view (Balázs D. 2016). Despite Chinese influence, the Maldives recognizes the importance of India and its tourists. (Chatterji A K 2024).

Methodology

This study is based on a qualitative structure. It is exploratory and analytical. The primary objective of the study is to investigate the interconnection between tourism and diplomacy. What is the significance of tourism diplomacy in the context of soft power and public diplomacy? Exploratory research relates to the 'How' and 'What' questions (Malhotra, 2010). Therefore, methodologically, we rely on research papers, books, policy papers, media reports, articles, columns, and reports on tourism, foreign policy initiatives, investment data, and analytical reports.

Discussion

Historical Background tourism diplomacy as a soft power component

The term diplomacy is believed to have originated from the French word diploma, which is derived from diplo, meaning a folded civic document. It is believed that politicians once carried such folded documents, which granted the holder special travel rights. The Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 is considered the beginning of diplomacy in modern international politics. However, diplomacy stems from human nature, as evidenced in the oldest texts, from the Old Testament to the Mahabharata and other epics. Diplomacy has an established tradition in ancient India. "In the Ramayana, Lord Rama sent Hanumana and Angada as his envoys to King Ravana to persuade him to avoid war and destruction... In the Mahabharata, Lord Krishna himself played the role of a mediator of last resort to avoid hostilities between the Pandavas and the Kaurvas. Commenting on different roles of authorities in a state, Manu stated, "Let the king appoint an ambassador." (Sachdev: 2014) Kautilya's Arthashastra is the world's first systematic treatise on diplomacy. It systematically explains the art of statecraft, foreign policy, and diplomacy, making it the first treatise on diplomacy. (Sachdev: 2014) Arthashastra, Kautilya's Mandala theory, and Shadgunya Niti provide important explanations of the art of statecraft. Kautilya's 'Saam Daam Dand Bhed' policy, which he justified for achieving diplomacy goals, has become a proverb in Indian politics today. The eternal tradition of travelling and tourism for knowledge and religion has been clearly established in Indian culture. "Pilgrimage was an important means of travelling in ancient India. Since the Vedic era, pilgrimages have been a common practice. The Rig Veda mentions that on the bank of the pious river Sarasvati, Aryans assembled and composed Vedic hymns, and the Taaittiriya Aranyaka described the Kailash Mountain on which Mansarovar is situated. It is supposed to be the abode of Lord Siva; anti-Aryans frequently visited this place (Rig Veda 3:23:4)." (Singh 2008) However, fundamental questions arise about the concept of tourism diplomacy.

What is the interrelationship between diplomacy and tourism?

The tourism industry developed rapidly after the Second World War. In 1970, the World Tourism Organisation approved its constitution, thereby institutionalizing the tourism industry. During the Cold War era, Europe and America held a dominant position in global tourism, accounting for a significant portion of the world's tourists. However, with the end of the Cold War and the advent of globalization, the tourism industry also underwent globalization. Today, regions such as Southeast Asia (138.6 million), North East Asia (170.3 million), West Asia (73 million), South Asia (33.8 million), Africa (69 million), and Latin America (35.6 million) contribute significantly to this industry. As compared to the share of advanced economies, which was 776 million, the share of emerging economies is now 688 million. The tourism industry has grown from 25.3 million in 1950 to 1464 million in 2019. (UNWTB:2023)

“In 2019, prior to the pandemic, travel and tourism (including its direct, indirect, and induced impacts) accounted for 10.5% of all jobs (334 million) and 10.4% of global GDP (US\$ 10.3 trillion). Meanwhile, international visitor spending amounted to US\$ 1.91 trillion in 2019.” (WTTC 2023) A significant change in quantity also has an impact. Hence, the growing size of the tourism industry and its \$1.5 trillion economy become a force in themselves. Today, the tourism industry is the world's third-largest industry, employing more than 10% of the global working population. The growing tourism industry in emerging economies and third-world countries automatically invites conflict of interest. Only diplomacy can balance the conflict of interest. Diplomacy exemplifies the ability to secure the most benefits from another state while advancing one's own interests with minimal or no resource expenditure. From this perspective, diplomacy functions as a form of soft power display, demonstrating power without resorting to direct force in the mutual relationships between states, with the expectation of achieving victory in conflicts of interests. “Diplomacy’ no longer refers only to the political relations between sovereign states but may now include the relationships of private individuals, for example, working in the tourism trade. “'Tourism' has acquired subdivisions such as economic, cultural, heritage, and gastronomic, among others.” (Tasam 2023)

Infrastructure plays a crucial role in the growing tourism industry in the third world, Central Asia, West Asia, Africa, South Asia, and Latin America, necessitating substantial investments. For all these things, things like good relations between nations, less tension in them, and separating controversial issues from business issues come to the fore, and diplomacy is definitely involved in all these things. Thus, diplomacy naturally establishes a relationship with the tourism industry.

“The relationship between tourism and diplomacy brings together two enormous areas of inquiry. Diplomacy shows a broad trend toward democratization during the past several centuries, especially with the expansion of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and tourism in recent years. Even domestic tourism, which at first glance does not appear related to diplomacy—usually seen as the relationships between countries—may show linkages in creating bridges between communities within one country.” (Gordon & Baranowski, et al. 2019)

In the 21st century, people-to-people interaction has increased substantially. People travel for a variety of reasons, including migration, business, studies, treatment, and tourism. All these increased economic activities contribute to GDP growth and boost economic dynamism. Almost every level of these activities involves some form of direct or indirect diplomacy. As a result, a variety of terms, such as tourism diplomacy, diaspora diplomacy, game diplomacy, medical tourism, medical diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and cinema and TV drama diplomacy, have gained popularity. All of these are broadly part of public diplomacy, which is an essential part of the state's soft power in international politics.

The definition of public diplomacy can include most overseas humanitarian activities “Scholars have defined public diplomacy as "the way in which both government and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions that bear directly on another government's foreign policy... A typical statement would describe public diplomacy as direct communication with foreign peoples with the aim of affecting their thinking and, ultimately, that of their governments. (Gilboa: 2008)

Thus, tourism diplomacy is not an independent concept in itself but is a part of public diplomacy, and public diplomacy is a tool of the soft power of states. "Scholars of International Relations (IR) have detected that tourism is one way of manifesting soft power; they do not feel comfortable nor ready to place the promotion of tourism into standard IR discourse... It is challenging to separate the economic and cultural functions of outbound tourism, each of which reinforces the other, although not without limits." (Chen & Duggan: 2016).

Increasing China's Outbound Tourist and Tourism Diplomacy

It would not be an exaggeration to say that one country, China, has taken tourism diplomacy very seriously and used it as a tool for foreign policy. China has developed a lot of soft power tools that expand Chinese influence and effectiveness. Joseph Nye defines "soft power" as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments." It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies" (Nye, 2005). China's rapid economic progress and material development itself are a soft power attraction to third-world countries that want rapid economic development. China also operates tourism activities in poor African countries. Chinese tourists, like other tourists from Asia, visit Europe and the USA, as well as Latin America, Africa, and the Indian Ocean islands, China has significantly increased its outbound travel to Sri Lanka and the Maldives in order to threaten the Indian monopoly, according to data on outbound tourists.

The first half of 2017 saw 62.03 million outbound trips, up 5% from the same period in 2016 and ranking first globally. One important reason for the growth is that the number of outbound tourism destinations included in the Chinese passport has greatly increased to 153 countries/regions. Among them, 65 countries/regions have provided convenient visa policies to Chinese tourists by July 11, 2017. Notably, 90% of Chinese citizens have yet to apply for passports for outbound tours. Currently, outbound border crossings have reached 122 million trips in 2016, elevating China to the status of the world's largest outbound tourism market. This expansion continues, with outbound tourism consumption reaching 109.8 billion US dollars. (Karki, N. 2020). According to Joseph Nye, soft power becomes active when a state successfully

persuades another state to do what it wants through intangible power resources such as culture, language, cinema, media, and tourism. (Nye, 2005). This perspective also highlights China's Belt and Road Policy and its significant investment. During the period 2005–18, China's global investment and construction amounted to \$1.7 trillion.

In China, outbound tourism embodies soft power, intrinsically connected to politics. People perceive the Chinese government as exerting control and influence over outbound tourism development, aligning it with the country's political agenda. (TSE: 2013) These facts also provide insight into China's tourist diplomacy policy activities, revealing that China is expanding the Approved Destination Status (ADS) to a growing number of countries, aiming to boost its outbound tourism. In 1983, China gave ADS facilities only to Hong Kong and Macau, but by 2014, this number had increased to 117, meaning China gave Approved Destination Status to more than 117 countries. All of these policies have led to a huge increase in the number of outbound tourists. (Tse: 2013)

The Chinese government, not the tourists themselves, makes most of the decisions about destinations for Chinese tourists through ADS. The Chinese government strictly controls the outflow of Chinese tourists through ADS, making it more than just a tourism-related phenomenon but a diplomatic endeavor. In 2008, China's outbound tourism reached \$36.2 billion, which is currently around \$50 billion. Following a COVID epidemic, dollar revenue from Chinese tourists is an important source of income for many poor African and Asian countries. In 2008, China had almost filled Macau with its tourists. (Fan 2010) China is doing the same thing now in Africa, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. People assert that China's investment and ADS policies undoubtedly reflect its political ambitions and strategic significance. Joseph Nye warns that China's neighbours, and even its trade and investment partners, are fearful of China due to its cultural and tourist activities, use of other components of soft power, and its clear policies of expanding soft power. (Nye, 2005) China's outbound tourist numbers reached 154.63 million in 2019 from 57.39 million in 2010. (Statista 2023) It translates to a threefold growth in just nine years.

India-Maldives Relations and Tourism Diplomacy

Only 210 of the approximately 1200 coral islands in the Indian Ocean to the southwest of India make up the Maldives. The Maldives spans an area of approximately 348 square miles. It is about 70 nautical miles from the Indian border at Minicoy in Lakshadweep and 300 nautical miles from the Indian west coast. The Maldives gained independence in 1965 and became a republic in 1968. India-Maldives relations have been cordial since 1974. Since 1988, India and the Maldives have maintained strong security relations and cooperation. The two countries signed a Comprehensive Action Plan for Defence in 2016. India has been training the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF). India has carried out nearly 70% of the training activity. In the last 10 years, India has conducted approximately 1500 such training programs for the Maldives. MNDF officers have been receiving training in the training institutes of Indian defence and medical establishments like NDA, OTA, INA, and AFMC.

“MNDF has also been participating in various joint activities with Indian Defence forces, such as joint EEZ patrols, joint exercises, anti-narco ops, SAR, sea-rider programs, HADR exercises, sailing regatta, etc. The Indian Navy has also provided MNDF with air assets for air surveillance, MEDEVAC, SAR, and helicopter-borne vertical insertion capability. Since 2019, the Indian Navy has conducted around 600 MEDVACs, SAR operations, and medical team transfers. A team of medical specialists has been serving Maldivians at MNDF's Senahiya Hospital, Male', in addition to providing medical equipment and sharing expertise with MNDF doctors. At AFMC, Pune, numerous MNDF doctors have received or are undergoing training. India-Maldives Defence Cooperation also covers joint exercises, maritime domain awareness, hardware gifting, infrastructure development, and so on. Key projects in the defence sector include the Composite Training Centre (CTC) for MNDF, the Coastal Radar System (CRS), the construction of a new Ministry of Defence Headquarters, and the construction of the “Ektha” MNDF harbor. In December 2018, India unveiled a financial aid package worth USD 1.4 billion, comprising USD 50 million for budgetary support to the GoM, a USD 150 million T-bill subscription by SBI, a USD 400 million currency swap

agreement, and eight infrastructure projects under the USD 800 million Line of Credit (LoC). India also offered additional 1000 training slots over the next 5 years.” (MEA 2024) In short, India and the Maldives have had cordial economic and strategic security relations. The Maldives has relied heavily on India for most of its needs. India has also tried to carry forward the history of cordial relations with the Maldives under the Neighbour First Policy, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and has continued economic and security assistance to the Maldives.

Tourism and Maldives

The Maldives' main industry was fishing earlier, but today tourism is the main source of economic activity in the Maldives. Its GDP share in the Maldives rose from 13% in 1980 to 30% in 2022. Thus, tourism accounts for about 30% of the Maldives' GDP and generates 60% of the country's foreign exchange. In 2009, the Maldives welcomed 655852 tourists, but by 2019, the number had increased to 1.7 million. (US State Department 2024)

“Tourist arrivals plummeted by 67.4% and the economy contracted by 32.9%, the deepest recession on record. Historically, fishing and agriculture were the main economic activities in the Maldives. In 1980, both contributed 35% of GDP together, whereas tourism contributed 13%. These industries have decreased their GDP share in recent years, while the government's focus on tourism has led to the industry directly accounting for more than 20% of the country's GDP, with a projected indirect contribution of 79% in 2022.” (Elisabette et . al., 2023)

In the Maldives, China is leveraging soft power, In fact, China is using both force and soft power against India in the Indian Ocean region. Under the String of Pearls policy, China is constructing military bases from the Asia Pacific region to the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, and Red Sea. It is also challenging Indian interests by employing soft power strategies such as the Belt and Road Policy, investing in Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and other Asia Pacific countries in the Indian Ocean region, and rapidly entangling these countries in debt. Apart from this, it also creates enough space in internal politics by using local

politics, corruption, and so on. Abdullah Yameen, a pro-China politician, was president from 2013 to 2018. Chinese influence is also believed to have played a role in the formation of the political party and the election of the current President, Mohammad Moizu. Maldives' debt-to-GDP ratio rose from 58.5 percent in 2018 to an estimated 61.8 percent in 2019, according to the World Bank (WB); it rose further to 138 percent in 2020. Notably, China alone contributes 20% of the Maldives' total foreign debt. The Maldives formally joined China's Belt and Road Initiative in 2014, under which China provided a \$1.4 billion loan and launched a number of large infrastructure investments in the Maldives. The most significant of these is the \$200 million China-Maldives Friendship Bridge, which connects Hulhulé and Hulhumalé to the capital Malé. (Basarkar 2024) After becoming president, Moizu chose China for his first foreign visit in January 2024, where the Maldives signed 20 agreements with China, the majority of which were defence and financial agreements. According to the Maldives' Department of Tourism's website, Chinese tourists currently make up the majority of visitors to the Maldives, with India occupying the sixth position. As of August 27, 2024, 5689 Chinese tourists (14.6%) and 80365 Indian tourists (6%) visited the Maldives. China has begun employing effective tourism diplomacy in the Maldives, with the primary goal of excluding India and integrating the Maldives into its sphere of influence. This is because 80% of China's oil originates from the Indian Ocean region. By enhancing its influence in the Maldives, China aims to fortify its position in the Ocean against both India and America. In the elections against India, President Moizu emerged victorious, and his party secured a substantial majority in the parliamentary elections in April 2024. According to the Maldives' constitution, the people directly elect both the President and the MP, which means that a loss in the parliamentary elections would hinder the President's ability to implement his economic and strategic policies. However, Moizu's party's success in the parliamentary elections has elevated him to the status of a near dictator, a position that China shares. Moizu is talking about Indian soldiers' withdrawal from the Maldives because of China's influence.

Indian Response

Moizu's boldness quickly became evident, as campaigns such as #Boycott Maldives began trending on Indian social media, causing the number of Indian tourists in the Maldives to drop from the top spot to the sixth. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also visited Lakshadweep. His video of walking on the beach of Lakshadweep became an iconic inspiration for Indian tourists. As a result, the number of Indian tourists visiting the Maldives fell drastically, and Indian tourists turned towards Lakshadweep. The Maldives soon understood this situation, and Moizu visited India to emphasise strengthening Maldives-India relations. In the current financial year, India has spent 93 million dollars on various Maldives projects. Even the Maldives president has softened his stance on Indian soldiers returning from the country. In fact, tourism is the backbone of the Maldives' entire economy, and the Maldives believes that it has cultural and historical relations with India, so Chinese tourists cannot be a substitute for Indian tourists. The Maldives is also a natural destination for Indian tourists, and large hotel groups like Tata have invested in the Maldives' tourism industry. Therefore, a negative impact on India-Maldives relations is unlikely, given the significant role of tourism diplomacy in this relationship. India's rapidly growing economy and the increasing purchasing capacity of Indians are increasing the number of Indian tourist's year after year, and the Maldives would certainly not want to lose its share in it.

Conclusion

Tourism diplomacy is an important economic and political activity in the contemporary world, but it is also part of public diplomacy and soft power as a concept of international politics. Joseph Nye first used the term "soft power" in international politics, but the elements he identified have been a part of international politics and mutual bilateral and multilateral relations of states for a very long time. Events like the establishment of language and cultural missions, the India Festival in the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Festival in India took place during the Cold War period. America and Europe established their institutions in third-world countries to propagate liberal democracy and a free market economy, and they also funded universities and the academic world to

disseminate related research. The western world holds the belief that only a free market economy can satisfy its economic, strategic, and security interests. As a result, the spread of a free market economy not only contributes to economic development, but it also serves security interests. In recent years, a lot of non-traditional elements have been used as soft power. China and Turkey are two such countries that have used it very successfully. Turkey has established a separate department for it, known as the TASAM Turkish Asian Centre for Strategic Studies. Languages such as Arabic, Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali have translated and broadcast the serial *Dilris Artargul*, which is based on Artarul Ghazi, the father of Osman, the founder of Turkey's Ottoman Empire. In *Dirilis: Ertugrul*, a minor 13th-century character in Turkish history has taken center stage, becoming a cult figure for millions of Muslims around the world. (Essa: 2020) "Ertugrul is the Muslim world's Black Panther" (KKhan 2020). Significantly, the production of this serial in Turkey with state money and its diplomatic promotion directly link President Tayyip Erdogan's ambition to displace Saudi Arabia in the Islamic world's leadership. President Tayyip Erdogan bases his domestic politics on empty slogans that call for a return to the golden days of the Ottoman Empire. "The TV drama "Ertugrul" reveals how neo-Ottoman fantasies are finding an enthusiastic audience in a country that struggles with Saudi and Western influence." (Bhutto 2020) Turkey has used history, culture, and media as a form of soft power, and this has had far-reaching benefits for its tourism industry, which has seen a rapid increase in tourist arrivals. "The number of foreigners visiting Turkey rose by 2.6% year-on-year to 7.3 million in July 2024, marking the highest number of monthly tourist arrivals to date. Arrivals increased from Iran (+25% to 312 thousand). Considering the January-July period, tourist arrivals increased by 8.3% year-on-year to 28.9 million." (Trading Economics, 23 August 2024)

The use of media software is not novel. In the 80s, Libyan dictator Mohammed Gaddafi had also made a successful attempt at this and made a film on his hero Omar Mukhtar called *Lion's Desert*. | "The film, funded by Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi and directed by Moustapha Akkad, told the story of Omar Mukhtar, the legendary Libyan and Senussi revolutionary who fought against

Italian colonialism during the early 20th century. The film bore the name *Lion of the Desert*. In 1981, the film entered theatres worldwide (ibid.).

China's integration of tourism diplomacy with its investment and loan diplomacy, as well as its application to the island countries of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, raises alarm. In South Asia, China's soft power diplomacy is very active in Nepal, Bangladesh, Burma, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. The political leadership established in these countries does not have a favorable attitude towards India. Despite India's protest, the presence of a Chinese spy ship at Hambantota port, as well as a Chinese spy ship in the Maldives, pose a challenge to Indian interests. India is concerned about China's deepening bilateral relationships with Bangladesh.

The continental route includes Myanmar and Nepal, while the maritime route includes the Maldives and Sri Lanka. However, given that the Indian Ocean is a primary area of interest for the Indian Navy, the MSR, in and of itself, is a major concern for India. New Delhi was not only beginning to voice its concerns about Beijing's expansion in India's neighborhood, both in the maritime and continental domains, but also clarified its stance on the BRI." (M., Barua: 2018) Despite India's effective response and active soft power diplomacy, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and other South Asian countries, with the exception of Pakistan, have demonstrated a positive shift in their perspectives. However, Indian policymakers must recognise the importance of tourism diplomacy as a soft power tool and allocate more resources and institutional resources in this area.

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