



Political factors in Indo-ASEAN relations

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Abstract

India and South East Asia have been maintaining strong relations since long back. Their cultures, languages, and politics have always brought them together. 11th century was a exception, otherwise India never acted as colonial power for the South East Asian Countries. Moreover, similarity can also be seen in this freedom movements. India also tried to strengthen bi-lateral ties with the South East Asians. For example, India signed Treaties of Friendship with Indonesia in March 1951, with Burma in July 1951, with Philippines in July 1952. India also concluded various types of trade agreements with Indonesia, Vietnam and other South-Asian nations. The Bandung Conferences of 1955 passed way for the establishment of Non-Signed Movement. But the differences started come out between India and Indonesia as a result of Nehru's approach towards world peace, while Nehru concentrated on world peace but Sukarno wanted that priority should be given to appose colonialism and imperialism. Thus the relations started detoriating between India and Indonesia.

Keywords: India, Asean

Introduction

India and South East Asia have been maintaining strong relations since long back. Their cultures, languages, and politics have always brought them together. 11th century was a exception, otherwise India never acted as colonial power for the South East Asian Countries. Moreover, similarity can also be seen in this freedom movements. India also tried to strengthen bi-lateral ties with the South East Asians. For example, India signed Treaties of Friendship with Indonesia in March 1951, with Burma in July 1951, with Philippines in July 1952. India also concluded various types of trade agreements with Indonesia, Vietnam and other South-Asian nations. The Bandung Conferences of 1955 passed way for the establishment of Non-Signed Movement. But the differences started comeout between India and Indonesia as a result of Nehru's approach towards world peace, while Nehru concentrated on world peace but Sukarno wanted that priority should be given to appose colonialism and imperialism. Thus the relations started detoriating between India and Indonesia.

The reputation of India run offered a setback when war broke out between India and China. Doubts were raised regarding India's policy of Non-alignment and Panchsheel Principles. The result was that Nehru's position suffered in South-East Asia and his proposal to make South-East Asia a "peace zone" also lost is significance. Burma, Combodia and Indonesia survived neutral towards this proposal. Thailand, Philippines and South Vietnam, who were the allied of USA, also did not support this proposal. Although India was its level best for the independence of Vietnam, but it (North Vietnam) also supported China against India. Malaysia was the only nation of this region who criticized China for invading India. During Indo-Pak war of 1965. The approach of most of the nations of South-East Asia was also opposed to India. Not only this Indonesia Provided moral and economic assistance to Pakistan

and India was declared as aggression state. Thus the relations between India and South East Asian nations continued to detoriate, when ASEAN was setup in 1967, India gave a cold response when USSR put forward the proposal of Asian collective security. India supported it. In 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and co-operation was signed. ASEAN was of opinion that India has made a compromise with its policy of Non-alignment. After the Arab-Israil war, 1973, India started giving preference to West Asian countries to meet out its energy requirements. India had many doubts about number of ASEAN members because of many factors. For example USA had special relationship with Philippines and Thailand US military bases were there, they were also members of CENTO, a military pact sponsored by USA. So India was not having good relations with some ASEAN countries as they pro-USA. Since India was very close to Viatnam, so it was the only non-communist country to recognize Combodia's Heng Samaring government in 1980. In short, it can be said that except Viatnam, there were no cordial relationship between India and other South-East nations, and India maintained distance with East Asia.

In the post-cold war era, some of the obstackles disappeared between Indo-ASEAN relationship. The disintegration Soviet Union also brought them together. Actually South-East Asia had doubts regarding India's policy to Afghanistan and Combodia. But the Russian forces were withdrawn from Afghanistan in 1988 and in 1989 Vietnam pulled back its forces fro Combodia. Thus this abstackle also disappeared.

Therefore, now India introduced a change in its foreign policy- Look East Policy was adopted India decided to improve its relationship with ASEAN members. India's attraction towards South East Asia was explained through the visits of Indian leaders. Indonesia in 1992, Thailand in 1994, Vietnam and Singapore in 1994 and Malaysia in 1995 were

visited by India Prime Minister. Cambodia Prime Minister also paid a visit to India in 1996. But again two factors created doubts between the two sides. The economic crisis was in SEA nations and India conducted nuclear explosions in 1998.

Again there was a big jump in the relations as the summit meet started between India and ASEAN started in 2002. First Pnom Penh summit was held between India and ASEAN. India got the same status while is given to ASEAN+3. Now India convened Indo-ASEAN+1 summits. A treaty of friendship and co-operation was signed between Indo-ASEAN in 2003. It gave new dimension to this partnership. Again the relationship became stronger when on the eve of 11th ASEAN summit, first East Asia summit was held and India was made a member of EAS.

To further strengthen the economic ties, the draft of CECA was prepared which was signed by India and ASEAN in 2003. It was given a definite shape in 2004 at Vientiane (Laos). Nehru had dreamt about the Asian Unity which was converted in to reality in 2005 when Bandung Conference was held. 106 Afro-Asian countries had participated in it. And India was requested to speak on behalf of Asia.

In 2007 Indo-ASEAN summit was held. Indian Prime Minister also discussed about Open Sky Policy for the two sides. Today's politics is dominated by economic factor is. India wants the exchange of trade, capital, investment, technology, availability of markets between the to sides, consequently FTA was signed between the two in 2009. This agreement became operational in July, 2010.

In 2010 ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly was held at Hanoi and India was given the status of observer. Thus India became 8th country to receive this status after Australia, Canada, E.U., Japan, South Korea, China and Russia. In 2013 Brunei was the venue of 11th Indo-ASEAN summit and 8th EAS. It was also attended by Indian Prime Minister. It further improved trade ties between the two sides. In 2014 Myanmar hosted 12th Indo-ASEAN summit. New Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi adopted a new approach towards ASEAN- Act East Policy. Thus LEP was conducted into AEP. It was declared by India that India would further improve its economic, trade and cultural ties with ASEAN.

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