

1. The remarkable positive change in India's foreign policy towards neighborhood is fraught with problems such as lack of trust and conflict between local political parties of the neighbouring countries on the one hand and geopolitics of regional and global powers on the other, which would delay the efforts to bear fruits. Do you agree? Give reasons.

Answer:

- The foreign policy of a country is the product of the complex interplay of history, geography, past experience, present requirements, perception of ruling elites of national interest and ideological consensus. It is also shaped & molded by domestic balance of forces; and the regional & international balance of forces.
- South Asia is a unique case of global integration without regional integration and the largest economic power of south Asia i.e. India till recent past was more focused on the global powers than its immediate neighbors. India changed its position after toward neighbors since Gujral doctrine (i.e. continuous engagement even without reciprocity from smaller neighbor), was accepted as a part of Indian foreign policy.

Neighborhood first Policy:

- Currently when we are talking about Asian century & India as a global power along with China to realize this dream. It is not possible for India to become a global power without taking care of its neighbors & being regional power.
- Government has given the primary impotence to its neighbors & has taken the proactive steps to improve the relations with them along with aligning the “Look East Policy” to “Act east Policy”.
- Media has termed it as a neighborhood first policy. This will have far reaching consequences favoring India’s position in the region if implemented successfully. This will also pave way for the regional integration as India is the focal point to integrate the multi diversity region. However, the current incidents show that path is not smooth to trade.

Major Challenges of neighborhood integration include:

- Trust Deficit: there has been lack of trust especially when it comes to relations with Pakistan & China. Past experience of breach of trust by china through 1962 war & its incursion in the Indian Territory in Laddakh region are mainly responsible for it. Pakistan supported cross border terrorism and border dispute in J&K are deepening this trust deficit. Recent issues of blockade of supplies to hilly area of Nepal by Madhesis in Tarai region was also seen as a step supported Indian government which culminated in lowest point in India Nepal relations.
- Local party politics especially in Tamil Nadu toward Tamil Issues in Sri Lanka is hampering the development of relations in the country. Water sharing of Tista river between West Bengal & Bangladesh also has been politicized as a regional issue.
- Many a times, countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka & Bangladesh are playing the China card in negotiations & draw extra benefits. Regional integration is impeded by the swinging relations of India & Pakistan. SAARC failure is a major example of regional geopolitics.
- Superpowers like USA, China to enhance their influence over south Asia region is using the region as their playground. Pivot to Asia policy of USA to contain the rise

of China & China's policy of One Belt One Road to extend its influence is the major interplay of these global powers. Continuous instability of Afghanistan & terrorism in the region is adding the vulnerability of the region.

- In spite of all these challenges India's efforts to improve relations with neighbors & its policy of continuous engagement even without reciprocation will bear fruit in time to come. India need to brush aside its image as big brother & should cooperate with its small neighbors. India should provide its expertise in field of IT, education, and medical to win the confidence of these neighbors & should refrain from the domestic politics of these countries.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Answer the following Questions

1. Is currency exchange rate a suitable measure of relative economic performance of countries? Despite improving macro-economic fundamentals, trade deficit in India continues to widen. Bring out the factors responsible for this situation. (150 words)
2. It will take much more than relief packages to address the problems being faced by the sugar industry in India. Discuss. (150 words)