



IDEATIONAL LIBERALISM AND INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

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ABSTRACT:

Ideational liberalism is one of the important variants of liberalism that talks about the role of domestic social identities as important determinants of state foreign policy. These preferences often shared by social identities are national identity and geographical borders, political decision making process and socio-economic regulation. Ideational liberal theory predicts that where conceptions of legitimate borders exist, harmony is possible. Ideational liberalism explains the requirement of foreign policy analysis based on three factors which are national identity, political ideology and socio-economic regulation. This papers analyses the Indian foreign policy by testing ideational liberal paradigm.



KEYWORDS: Foreign Policy, Ideational Theoretical Framework, Liberalism, Diplomacy, International Relations.

INTRODUCTION

Where social identities are incompatible and create noteworthy externalities, pressure and conflict is more possible (Moravcsik 1997:525). The first important form of shared identity dominant in the domestic choice of foreign policy includes the set of societal preferences relating to the nation which in turn purposes valid site of national borders and the distribution of privileges of citizens (Moravcsik 1997:526). The idea of "identity" in this way functions as a key link between environmental structures and interests. This word comes from social psychology, where it relates to the picture of individuality and distinctiveness believed and planned by an actor and shaped in relations with others. This is unlike constructivism where identity is constituted while representing the mutual interest of different country in international structure whereas the logic of ideational liberals are more inclined to domestic preferences based on the logic of instrumental rationality or the logic of consequentialism or consequences. James Marac and John Olsen (1989, 1998) have explained that in logic of consequentialism agents participate on the basis of their given identities and interests. They try to satisfy their preferences through strategic behaviour. It is a kind of instrumental rationality whereby the goal of action is to maximise national interest. It is guided by the outcome of action. The logic of appropriateness is based on the behaviour guided by the norms and principles. It differs from instrumental rational behaviour. Actors try to do the right thing rather than maximizing their preferences. It implies constitutive reasoning. This has opened up a conceptual area between a rationalist and constructivist logic. While ideational liberalists are focusing more on the creation of veto players (agent setting structure), constructivist are covering how structures and agents co-constitute one another (Harnisch 2010: 27).

Moravcsik (1997) argues that the government of a particular country gets the support which matches with their identity based preferences. The consequences of identity based preferences is based on the realisation of the social demands and values. Foreign policy will be an action to realise social values about legitimate borders, political institutions and socio-economic regulation. Where the conception of legitimate borders, political institutions and socio-economic equality are compatible, harmony is likely. On the contrary to this compatibility, conflict is possible.

First social identity is related with the scope of the state which endorses the legitimate location of borders and citizenship rights. In scope of nation, the roots of national identity may be reflected in different aspects of identification which are based on language, culture of religion or shared set of historical experiences. In present Asia, there are many instances where ethnic groups create potential border disputes. These are the conflicts and disputes between Pakistan and Afghanistan over the Pashtu tribes, India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Weiner (1971) viewed that Somalia's demand for the Somali-Occupied territory of Ethiopia, Kenya and French Somaliland and Armenians living in Turkey, the Soviet Union and Iran, Azerbaijani spread over in the Soviet Union and Iran and the Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Iraq can be perceived as an important question of identity. Palestinian and Israel conflict can be perceived as such kind of dispute based on the social identity in international politics (Weiner 1971:671). The dispute between Bulgaria and Macedonia is an example of social identity. Macedonians were spread in three countries and provided the base for the revisionist policy to Bulgarian foreign policy (Weiner 1971:671). Broadly, these examples show that the question of the identity has been important. Similarly, Kashmiris who are stressing on Islamic and ethnic identity, are likely to be pro-Pakistani and at the same time those who spread the idea of autonomous identity they support of autonomous status or leaned towards India (Weiner 1971:674).

Kashmir problem is a result of three forces: religious nationalism of Pakistan, secular nationalism represented by India, ethnic nationalism epitomised by Kashmiris. At the time of the partition, Pakistan believed that the Muslim majority state should go to it. But this religious nationalism has been contested by the Indian national movement led by the Congress party (Varshney 2010:30). The identity discourse analysis allows us to understand narratives which are based on two narratives. These two narratives explores the ideas regarding similarities and variations in Indian national identity. In this discourse, there is an explicit or implicit understanding of how others are not a constituting part of "We" (Commuri 2009:162). Since 1948, India and Pakistan have attempted to settle the issue of Kashmir. They even turned to United Nation and many times they have engaged in bilateral negotiations. Kashmir was disturbed by insurgency in 1990s. India claimed that the insurgency has been backed by Pakistan. In a speech in Lok Sabha, Inder Kumar Gujral summed up the necessity of engagement with Pakistan over Kashmir issue. He pointed out that Pakistan has to be treated with certain degree of friendship, tolerance and firmness, an amalgamation which is going to be necessary (Dixit 1995:151). This was the first time since mid-1980s that Indian government engaged in talks with Pakistan. Since then Indian government stated that dialogue can be initiated only after there is an end to cross border terrorism. Between India and Pakistan, two points of contentions have emerged. India insists that Kashmir being a political problem needs to be resolved at the bilateral level. Secondly, India pursues to focus on the resolution of six issues along with Kashmir, while the main agenda of Pakistan is to discuss Kashmir issue which Pakistan insists upon. There were a series of meeting set up to resolve the problem related to these conflictual issues like Siachen, Sir Creek, Tulbul navigation, drug trafficking, terrorism, trade and cultural exchange. India wants to discuss several argumentative issues rather than focusing on Kashmir. The result has been a standstill (Commuri 2009:172). Since Kashmir has emerged as an issue to be discussed, what are some of the preferences adopted by the Indian government the manifestation of the values related to social identity in its effort to resolve the conflicts? The conflict in Kashmir is a clash between identities, imagination and history. These competing history, comes from images of self and other. Pakistan has long argued that Kashmir problem originate from India's point to deny justice to Kashmiri people by not permitting them to join Pakistan. India has found it difficult to accept the notion based on the religion because of its basic characteristics of secularism (Cohen 2003:16, 17). After 1989, there is a movement of self-determination among Kashmiri Muslims.

They were against the performance of Indian governance in the state (Cohen 2003:19). A peace process requires a change in the policy of India towards Kashmir itself. Some favour no alteration in the relationship of Delhi and Srinagar. Some are urging a gradation of autonomy for Kashmir and a few are keen to see the state partitioned, perhaps along the line of control (Cohen 2003:25). Kashmir conflict rotates around many multifaceted and multilayered issues. The opportunities to discover ways to find a fair, feasible and long-lasting solution to the conflict rests on deeper understanding of these complexities (Behra 2006). The battle is seen between those who believe in a boundary and those who believe that their ethnic and subnational claims surpass such type of barriers. There can be seen two positions on the electoral process. One group is more inclined to participate in the electoral process of the state in comparison to another separatist groups which oppose the political electoral process in valley. One route is conceived as a route to political legitimacy in the state. The mainstream political parties like the National Conference and People's Democratic Party participate in state elections. After entering into alliance with national parties they run the state government. Other like Hurriyat leadership and their supporters do not participate in elections. The people of the state have to choose between those who participate in Indian electoral democracy. There is a problem of political legitimacy –who really command political legitimacy in Kashmir. The true legitimacy has to be premised on popular will of the people (Vajpeyi 2014). In the foreign policy of India, ideational factors are more important in the relationship between India and Pakistan. The relationship between two neighbors cannot be conditioned just by material forces and structural factors but also by very real ideational issues of national identity and purpose (Nasr 2005:178-201).

India's north east includes the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. Strategically this region is very significant for framing Indian foreign policy. This area is linked to the Indian inland by a 22km land corridor through Siliguri in west Bengal, is known as Chicken neck (Krishan 2001:663). Siliguri corridor comes as one of the top strategic anxiety in Indian strategic culture. From Siliguri, there is less distance towards Bangladeshi and Nepalese borders. The question of the connectivity with neighbouring countries becomes significant and crucial from a strategic point of view. The insurgency in the northeast India is becoming an issue in Indian foreign policy. In the northeast, insurgency operates mainly in Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya. Various groups have adopted Maoist strategy for countering existing system. The North East of India flanked by China, Bhutan and Myanmar is an example of attitudes involving complex beliefs and values combined with different views of history and geography which makes ethnic and demographic problems difficult to resolve. Several movements asserting their regional identities are seeking recognition and some demanding secession from the Indian state. Many insurgent movements are still in progress in North-East India (Malone 2012:59). These groups include United Liberation Front of Assom (ULFA), National Socialist Council of Nagaland: Isak-Muivah Group (NSCN-IM), Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT), United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS), Dima Halam Daogah (DHD), National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), Mizo National Front (MNF). Looking at identity assertion as manifested in the context of the identity of this specific region could be helpful to understand the north east (Ruscheweyh and Lauser 2013:190).

A second type of major identity is based on commitment of people and groups to particular ideology. Ideas are considered important, but at the same time the world is composed of many economic, technological and other powerful constraints that limits certain ideas and social constructions (Gilpin 2001:20,402). Besides, ideas can bring about a great change in political process, For example: French Revolution vs Ancient Regime, Catholic vs. Protestant, capitalism vs communism. Traditional notion of the state has come under attack because of the evolving nature of economic interdependence in international system and it is argued to be outdated (Smith 1986:13). It has been realised that interdependence can open up new way to integrate into world economy, (Mehta 2009:225). Economic liberalization as an ideology is playing a significant role. In India's foreign policy so far as the role of India in the globalization process is concerned, it is poised to continue the policy of economic liberalization introduced by the Rao Government in mid of 1991 under the economic stewardship of bureaucrat-turned-politician Mr. Manmohan Singh, the finance minister, and carried on

by the United Front (UF) government under the leadership of Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda. Having departed from the Nehruvian model of development based on socialist philosophy, the Rao Government realized that India's economic conditions in the wake of dwindling foreign exchange reserves, balance of payment crisis called for debureaucratization, deregulation and decontrol. The rationale behind introducing economic reforms was to free the Indian economy from the fetters of ideological rigidities so that Indian economy could be integrated with global economy. These were also aimed at establishing economic linkages with regional economic groupings, such as the EU (European Union) and APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) etc., while making it a positive instrument for social and economic development. Earlier foreign policy of India perceived the investment by foreign investors unfriendly. The percentage of equity was restricted to 40% except in areas of technology. Foreign investment was rejected in the consumer goods. The new policy is much more supportive and permission is granted for investment up to 51%. Various restrictions have been eliminated by amendment of the foreign exchange regulation act irrespective of the level of foreign equity (Ahluwalia 1993:4). Trade policy has been substantially liberalised. Today, all raw materials can be easily imported excluding relatively small negative list. Elimination of quantitative constraints on custom duty has been supplemented by a slow sinking of custom duties. Exchange rate policy has gone through a sequence of transitional regime leading to a total transformation (Ahluwalia 1993:5). New government is clearly defining Indian interest "India first" in term of technological and economic development. These goals have been manifested in the foreign policy goals of India (Virani 2014). Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered his speech on foreign policy at the council on foreign relations in New York in September 2014. In his speech, he described two pronged framework for Indian foreign policy in the present time. He has focused on the neighborhood policy and a pursuit of India's economic interests (George 2014).

The third identity for the foreign policy can be perceived as the characteristics of legitimate social-economic rules and rearrangement. The substantial concept of modern liberal ideas has accepted that social preferences regarding the nature of domestic compulsion imposes legitimate bounds on the state and markets. Like the words of Polanyi, Ruggie in recent times repeats that the structure of international market has been negotiated with common welfare (Moravcsik 1997:527). The nature of legitimate socio-economic regulation and distribution is central social identity to foreign policy. Societal preferences related to the nature of regulation impose legitimate limits on markets. Liberalism has laid more importance on the individual achievement (Holmes 1995:12). It is must for the market that it should enjoy the social legitimacy. The political sustainability of the market somehow depends on it. It is true that transnational companies from different countries have expanded significantly and operated at the global level. The growing governance gap between the activities of these transnational companies and the ability to manage the adverse effects puts the emphasis on social legitimacy. Social legitimacy is required for the legitimacy of markets if they are to be sustained. The social legitimacy has been derived on the basis of the values and principles of national societies and broadly in global civil society (Abdulla & Ruggie: 154,161). Polanyi sees market as unavoidably limited by institutional rules which is linked to the moral fabric of the social order. Unregulated market is considered as leading to lack of social cohesion in society. The term "embeddedness" is seen mentioning the political or social reformist task of organizing the society through institutional guideline to the markets, especially in realms of fictitious commodities: land, money and labour. Thus, the idea of embeddedness is not the economy as such but the social systems in which all economies all positioned (Barber 1995:406). The embeddedness of market is not the consequence of market in itself. But it is unbalanced result of social and political struggles which has to be safeguarded by means of thoughtful political arrangement from the danger of an institutional separation of society from the political and economic sphere (Polanyi 2001:74). Polanyi made it clear that market systems are not generous for humanity. Rather, they are political achievements realised through the state (Carrier 2009:240). Even in the west, it is considered necessary for the state on the one hand, and environment and women's movements on the other to ensure distributive justice and environment ethics and affirmative commitments. All kind of market related agencies have to be abide by the laws of the state (Kothari 1995:1595, 1597). State cannot be seen as aloof from the society. It is embedded in society containing an array of interacting forces where

different forces represent different interests in the society (Vanik 2006:5046). The relationship between state and market in India has gone through a significant change in the wake of India's policy of liberalisation. This process of economic liberalization has brought closer links between global and local process. This complex interplay has led to the emergence of new issues which were at the margins of the political space (Srivastava 2010). Liberal policies have resulted in more complex forms of state interactions emerging from environmental degradation, international terrorism and trade security (Ogden 2014).

Socio-economic domestic compulsions are playing a major role in Indian foreign policy. The Indian foreign policy on climate and energy issue and trade (agriculture and TRIPs) is very much aligned with the cause of social welfare since 1991. These major issues are related to the growth of Indian economy and the survival of large population of India. Indian foreign policy has to make a strategy to protect the interest of the people. These domestic compulsions cannot be sidelined. Scholars have argued that on these issues India has adopted a posture of defensive and distributive strategy. It is argued that India's position has been very normative while bargaining on these issues. But it can be said through these domestic compulsion, India is trying to pursue the interest of society.

CONCLUSION:

Various theoretical perspectives are significant to analyse the foreign policy of India since 1991 on the basis of their specific frameworks involving detailed analysis. Further, locating ideational liberalism within the mainstream theory of liberalism extends the possibility of more rigorous enquiry of preferences in Indian foreign policy. Ideational liberalism claims that different perceptions on domestic political legitimacy transforms into different preferences and hence variation in state's foreign policy behaviour. The facts of power cannot be considered as plain and clear as realist arguments have made. The general self-interest depends upon the judgment based on trust and value (Lumsdaine 1993:20) and domestic compulsion. The multifaceted and multilayered construction of ideas regarding preferences in foreign policy of Indian state become essential to explore for crystalising the relation of India with neighboring and other countries of the world.

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