INTRODUCTION

The Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are having vast natural resources of oil and natural gas. While Kazakhstan is a major oil producing country, Turkmenistan carries huge reserves of natural gas within. These republics have acquired not only a role of geo-strategic importance, but also a magnetic significance for attracting many countries. These republics have large potential and opportunities for India as it has been involved in both the republics. India has acquired 25 percent stakes in Satpayev block, 15 percent in Alibekmola oil field and 10 percent in Kurmangazy field in Kazakhstan and also signed a MoU for the supply of uranium with Kazatomprom. With Turkmenistan, the TAPI pipeline is a major cooperative measure for India.

India is the second most populous country in the world after China which comprises over 17 percent of the world’s population. Being an intermediate power, India’s economy is developing day by day. The development occurring in various fields like big industries, progress in infrastructure, nuclear field, hydro power projects, communication, transportation etc., require a huge amount of energy resources. With the growing requirements the demand and significance for energy is growing more and more in India.

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, renowned scientist and former President of India, defined energy security as, “ensuring that our country can supply lifeline energy to all its citizens, at affordable costs at all times.” According to the Planning Commission of India defined it as, “we are energy secure when we

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can supply lifeline energy to all our citizens irrespective of their ability to pay for it as well as meet their effective demand for safe and convenient energy to satisfy their various needs at competitive prices, at all times and with a prescribed confidence level considering shocks and disruptions that can be reasonably expected."

At global level energy security is viewed to ensure adequacy of resources and at regional level it is viewed to ensure networking and trading which can take place. At the country level it can be seen as national security of supply chains whereas at the consumer level ensuring that consumer demand can be satisfied.³

Presently, India is the world’s fourth largest country in the world in terms of energy consumption.⁴ However, by 2030, India is projecting to surpass Japan and Russia to emerge as the third largest consumer of energy in the world.⁵

Central Asia can be a great source for fulfilling India’s future energy requirements. Having huge potential of hydrocarbons, the republics of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan can be a prominent hub for Indian energy needs. But there are many difficulties in acquiring energy from the region.

The proposed research on ‘India’s Interests in Central Asian Region: Prospects of Energy Cooperation with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan’ has been broadly divided into four chapters.

The Chapter one on ‘India’s Relations with Central Asia’ covers an age old historical and cultural relations. The chapter also discusses how historical ties

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1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
provide a unique basis for India to have an effective relations with the republics of Central Asia which she considers as near abroad with geo-strategic interests. Presently, India is establishing a bilateral relationship with each of the republics of Central Asia at highest level.

The second chapter on ‘India’s Strategic Interests in Central Asia’ deals with India’s strategic interests and its presence in the Central Asian region. The republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are geo-strategically important. How this factor has attracted many other countries like United States, Russia, China, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey and how the presence of these countries may affect India’s interests in the Central Asian region is being discussed in this chapter.

The third chapter entitled ‘India’s Energy Cooperation with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan’ discusses India’s energy cooperation with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan republics. These republics are rich in hydrocarbons and have vast reserves of oil and natural gas whereas India has shortage of energy. Being world’s fourth largest energy consumer, India is an energy deficit country. The chapter examines how these two republics are cooperating with India in the energy sector.

The Central Asian region has no common borders with India and poses no direct security threat to it. The factors, like Islamic fundamentalism, China’s growing influence in the region, Arms and Drug trafficking, Pakistan’s assistance to extremists etc., which can have implications on India’s security, are dealt with in the fourth chapter ‘Central Asia’s Security and Its Implications on Indian Security’. The chapter also highlights how India and Central are cooperating on security related issues.
The concluding chapter provides an analysis of the research conducted in the thesis and suggests certain measures that might be useful to formulate India’s policy framework towards Central Asia to safeguard its interests.