Preface

The last decade of the twentieth century has come to be viewed as a watershed in the history of International Relations (IR hereafter). The end the cold war, collapse of the soviet bloc, the dawn of globalization and the rise of new social movements have all come to characterize the nature of IR during this period. This period was also a witness to most of my formal academic accomplishment which bear full impression of these developments. The most momentous incident of this period had been the end of the ideological divide between east and west owing to the end of cold war and the collapse of the USSR. Francis Fukuyama’s much publicized and celebrated thesis of the “end of history” was articulated against such a backdrop.¹ The end of the cold war also signaled the end of the challenges posed by the hostile ideologies like Fascism or Marxism-Leninism to the western liberal democracies. This meant that the western liberal ideology was fully capable of explaining the realities of IR by virtue of its historical standing and its acceptance as a way of life by most of the people across the world.

The second important development of IR was the dawn of globalization in the 1990s. The processes of globalization range from economic integration to cultural exchange. It is usually understood as a process in which barriers (physical, political, economic, cultural) separating different regions of the world are reduced or removed, thereby stimulating exchanges in the realm of knowledge systems and goods. Globalization allows freedom of movement (liberalization), and to most people this seems positive. Globalization also supposedly promotes mutual reliance. The increase in the volume of transaction in the areas of goods and information has apparently led to a concomitant growth in interdependence between countries as they have increasingly come to rely on various imported products, services, and cultural inputs.

Such a process, it is often argued, has made the existing national territorial boundaries and cultural markers obsolete, minimizing the gap between east-west and/or north-south.

However, the other side of globalization, many argue, is quite bleak as it promotes economic and cultural hegemony. At the economic level, the dominance of neo-liberal framework is seen as weakening the control of host governments control over trade and foreign investment. This is further accompanied by the implementation of structural adjustment measures by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). The twin agencies are seen as clearly dominating the economies of these countries by determining the terms of trade, wages, currency exchanges, and state development policies. Other global institution such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) has usurped many of the powers once reserved for national governments. Trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the WTO, it is argued, are controlled by the wealthy, industrialized nations that set the agenda to protect the interests of foreign investors and the mobility of capital in supply chains at the cost of the interests of the labor.

These developments have changed the nature of the world order from a bipolar to that of a multi-polar world order. The new world order promised many new avenues of development for the future. One of the major characteristics of this new world order is the enhanced importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs hereafter). The increased importance of NGOs may be attributed to the triumph of western liberal ideology over the rival Marxist-Leninist ideology. Western liberalism encourages minimum role for the state and advocates equal importance for other actors as well in IR. Of late, NGOs could be seen as playing significant roles in various international deliberations. This is true of its role in the area of international agenda settings along with the traditional state actors.

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With all these developments in IR, the older dominant issues of ‘national security’ have somewhat receded to the background and newer issues have come to occupy the centre-stage of IR. These issues range from human rights violations to environmental degradation which were earlier considered to be part of the domain of low-politics and never played any role in defining the international agenda. As part of new social movements, these issues now collectively pose a serious challenge to the traditional geo-strategic orientation of the statecraft. The environmental issues that surfaced in a big way in the beginning of 1990s raised the hopes of the international community that even sovereign states can put their acts together in the larger interest of humanity and effectively resolve common problems. It has been argued that with the intensification of globalization that includes exchange of information and new scientific discoveries, global environmental issues can be easily addressed.

With the emergence of diverse environmental problems at the global level, various theoretical approaches were developed by the International Relations theorists believed to be universally applicable. The most prominent one among these is the Neo Liberal institutional approach which postulates that maintenance of consistent cooperation among the international institutions, international organizations and NGOs can go a long way in addressing the environmental problems. Such issues according to them need to be addressed with a broader global outlook on the part of both the state as well as various civil society institutions like the NGOs.

The present study is located within the above premises, as it attempts to assess the relevance/applicability of the neoliberal institutional theory to the Indian Foreign policy on environment. The present work attempts to argue that the neoliberal institutional approach is not relevant in case of a developing country like India where the developmental issues are accorded higher priority over environmental issues. The study also seeks to explore the possible reasons for the failure of neo liberal

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5 New social movements refer to diverse arrays of collective actions that have presumably displaced the old social movement of proletarian revolution due to the presumed transcendence of industrial capitalism. The cultural version of NSM theory rejects the Marxist vision of the centrality of the system of production and class-based struggle as the engine of social change. Instead, it focuses on the decentralized nature of both power and resistance. This perspective sees collective actions as based on a plurality of identity-oriented issues. Unlike the workers’ movement, these movements do not limit themselves to seeking material gain. Rather than advocating for redistributive struggles in the conventional political sphere, post-materialist values emphasize the quality rather than the quantity of life.
institutional approach in addressing environmental issues by focusing on the Indian foreign policy. Further, it tries to argue that NGOs in a developing country like India lack a broader outlook and are not as assertive as their Western counterparts. Thus, these NGOs lack the wherewithal to persuade the Indian state to enact legislation or make policies to help protect the environment.

II

The present study arrives at these conclusions by undertaking a thorough analysis of the politics of environment both at the national and global level. It primarily focuses on the three global environmental problems. These problems are considered to have far reaching implications, as they pose common global threat to humanity at large. It may thus not be out of place to present a brief overview of the seriousness of the problem.

The issue of climate change or global warming is widely believed to be the most serious one. The average temperature of the earth’s surface has risen by 0.6 degrees C since the late 1800s. It is expected to increase by another 1.4 to 5.8 degrees C by the year 2100 – a rapid and profound change. Even if the minimum predicted increase takes place, it will be larger than any century-long trend in the last 10,000 years. The current warming trend is expected to cause extinctions of various species. Human beings, while not threatened in this way, are likely to face mounting difficulties. Many coastal countries like Bangladesh and island countries like Maldives may face mass displacement of population or extinction of the country itself, if the sea level rises due to global warming.

The second equally serious environmental problem is the depletion of stratospheric ozone layer. Reductions in ozone levels will lead to higher levels of

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7 See; <http://www.globalissues.org/Envlssues/GlobalWarming/Intro.asp>
ultraviolet (UV-B)\textsuperscript{9} radiation reaching the Earth's surface. These radiations would have harmful effect on human health.\textsuperscript{10} Laboratory and epidemiological studies demonstrate that UV-B radiation causes nonmelanoma skin cancer and plays a major role in malignant melanoma development. In addition, UV-B radiation has been linked to cataracts. All sunlight contains some UV-B radiation, even with normal ozone levels. It is always important to limit exposure to the sun. However, ozone depletion will increase the amount of UV-B radiation and the risk of health effects. Research also suggests that increased UV-B radiation could result in decreased crop production and change in the species composition of natural aquatic ecosystems resulting in more unstable ecosystems.\textsuperscript{11}

The third environmental problem which has local, regional and global repercussion at the same time is biodiversity loss. Biological diversity or biodiversity forms the web of life of which we are an integral part and upon which we so fully depend. It is the combination of life forms and their interactions with each other and with the rest of the environment that has made Earth an uniquely habitable place for humans. Biodiversity provides a large number of goods and services that sustain our lives. The loss of biodiversity can put our lives into danger. The long-term viability of species and ecosystems depends on their being free to evolve in natural conditions. This means that humans have to learn how to use biological resources in a way that minimizes their depletion. The challenge is to find economic policies that motivate conservation and sustainable use by creating financial incentives for those who would otherwise over-use or damage the resource.

This flashy picture of the world can push any concerned young person to probe into whether or not enough is being done to reverse the process of ecological destruction. I, myself, am very much concerned with the question – whether or not current developmental values are complementary to the conservation of environment? If not, what efforts have been made or are being made by the various governments of

\textsuperscript{9} UV-B is the segment of the ultraviolet spectrum between 290-320 nanometers (nm). Ozone in the stratosphere absorbs much of the incoming solar UV-B radiation. Only 10-30 percent of UV-B is transmitted to the surface of the earth. UV-B causes sunburn, eye damage, premature aging and wrinkling of the skin, and skin cancer.

\textsuperscript{10} See for details; <http://www.epa.gov/docs/ozone/defs/#uvb>

the world in general and the Indian government in particular to make development environment friendly? Of course, the cost of environment friendly development would be higher than the conventional development. However, this extra cost has to be put up with keeping in mind the long term developmental interests of human beings. As I have grown up in the age of globalization, I personally believe that the successful conclave of big international environmental events, the new enthusiasm and optimism generated by numerous environmental conferences and conventions and the growing individual concerns for environmental protection during the last two-three decades do indicate that the future may not be so bleak after all.

III

In conjunction with the above raised hopes, the reading on Indian foreign policy passed on to me by teachers and scholarship of the post-independence period always emphasized the need for the development of an idealist, humanist and globalist outlook in international deliberations. This optimistic outlook of the Indian foreign policy was a direct response to the legacy of freedom struggle. In the initial years of India’s foreign policy making, it was believed that international institutions like the United Nations could play an important role in resolving global as well as local issues. The Nehurivan era in particular reflected this optimism. The basic component of Nehurivan foreign policy was to generate a global view of the local problems. This was so as he believed that the complex web of international relations precludes nations from evolving effective solutions individually even to the apparently small and local problems.12

Nehru asserted that it was only through the systematic application of science that the developing countries could understand world movements and politics. This reflected unbridled faith of Nehru in science. However, he was also suspicious of the fact that hyperfactualism of science could result in the loss of human spirit. Therefore, he wanted to give a humanistic blend to science. As he remarked, we must “function in line with the highest ideals of the age we live in... These ideals may be classed

12 Ibid., p. 192.
under two heads: humanism and the scientific spirit. Between these two there has been an apparent conflict... [However] There is a growing synthesis between humanism and scientific spirit, resulting in a kind of scientific humanism.”

With a view to articulating India’s foreign policy in line with the above rationale, Nehru tried his best to imbibe all the philosophical characteristics of his times. The adoption of panchsheel principles of mutual relations and the policy of non-alignment which have been principal characteristics of the Indian foreign policy till date are clearly in line with the broader objectives of developing idealism, humanism and globalism. Interestingly, the Indian foreign policy has not much deviated from these broader objectives set during the Nehurivan era.

These broader objectives of Indian foreign policy are much in line with values that global environmental deliberations demand. Under the broader ambit of these objectives, I wanted to see how India was responding to the global need for healthy environment. However, I was in for quite a few surprises that Indian foreign policy has not played a constructive role in the protection of environment. Its role has been assertive on some counts where it has wanted to gain in material terms in environmental negotiations, and defensive where it found its sovereignty at risk. This is something quite in contrast with the youthful expectation.

These narratives are reported in this thesis. For that matter, I have broadly divided the thesis into five chapters. The environmental issues did not come to the agenda of Indian policy makers all of sudden. In fact, environmentalism has a long history and its roots can be traced in the west. The first chapter, “Environmental Issues: From Local to the Global”, traces these historical roots in the west and explains how the intensification of environmentalism during the last quarter of the 20th century and the institutionalization of environmental issues both at local and international level led to the growing awareness of these issues among people. In this chapter an attempt has been made to identify the various environmental challenges like global warming, ozone depletion, biodiversity loss, etc. before the world. Since these problems are global in nature, they require states’ cooperation at a global level.

for their rectification. However, in reality such cooperation is hard to achieve due to the restrictive outlook of both the developing as well as developed countries towards the environmental issues.

The growing awareness on environmental issues is further problematized in this thesis in the second chapter, “How Feasible is a Global Environmental Agenda: The Theoretical Debate”, through a discussion of various theoretical frameworks which seek to address these issues. This chapter points out the weaknesses of the realist/ Marxist/ecofeminist theories in providing solutions to the environmental problems. This is because of their increasing apathy towards the existing structures of state and civil society. This chapter suggests that the neo-liberal institutional approach which advocates the growing role of both intergovernmental and non governmental institutions provides a good framework to address global environmental issues.

This sets the platform for us to study the Indian foreign policy on environment which is done in the third chapter, “Indian foreign Policy: Developmentalism as Freedom”. This chapter clearly explains that development has been an overwhelming priority of the Indian government in international environmental negotiations. After independence, the Indian foreign policy was pursued as a tool to rectify what led to their colonial subjugation and of course economic development through rapid industrialization was their first priority. However, this priority did not change even during the 1990s when environmentalism became a slogan of the day. This leads us to question – why India has not budged from its original position. Is the answer to this question to be found only in the nature of the Indian state, or also in the nature of Indian environmentalism too?

This is how we are directed toward the fourth chapter, “Indian Environmentalism: How Local, How Global”, which seeks to answer the question raised in the previous chapter. This chapter traces the weaknesses of the Indian environmentalism, as articulated by various national and transnational NGOs which too failed to pressurize the Indian government to take cognizance of environmental problems while formulating developmental policies.
The last chapter, “Where Do We Go From Here?” concludes that the neo-liberal institutional framework is not fully applicable in case of India. India being a Third World country constitutes a special case where western theoretical assumptions are not applicable.