

INTRODUCTION

The West Asian region, particularly the Gulf region has always been important to the world and was a coveted region due to its oil wealth as well as a strategic location. India had political, economic and cultural contacts with the region since time immemorial. This region had been very important to India for its strategic location as well as its oil wealth. India had to maintain very good relations with the countries of the region and it was India's good relations with Arabs that governed its relation with Israel soon after independence. India did not recognize Israel after its creation on the ground it was created. Even after it recognized Israel in 1950, it did not establish normal diplomatic relations with Israel till 29 January 1992. India's relations with Israel lay dormant for about four decades. However the changes in international geo-strategic environment compelled India to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992.

The event that compelled India to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel was Gulf War, which seriously undermine the unity of the Arab world. The subsequent end of the Cold war had a positive impact on the peaceful solution of many international problems. The first sign of a change in India's anti-Israel policy appeared is the little known meeting between Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao and Joseph Leibler, a prominent Jewish leader during November 1991 followed by India's note for the revocation of the UN Resolution 3379 of November 1975 that had equated Zionism with racism. The official level meeting between India's Deputy Chief of Mission, Lalit Mansingh and the Israeli representative Joseph Hadass took place at the Indian embassy in Washington in January 1992. Finally India announced its decision on 29 January, 1992 to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel.

In India, with the changing international scenario subsequent to the end of the Cold War, the view of pro-Israeli microscopic minority gained prominence. There were three main arguments. Firstly, India would be in a better position to involve itself in the West Asian peace process and thereby influencing Israeli policy in favour of Palestinian. Secondly, advantage in specific areas like military modernization, agriculture innovation and global Jewish investment. Lastly, the emergence of an Islamic bloc in the world politics made it essential that India should change its pro-PLO stance and move closer to Israel.

During the past several years Indo-Israel relations have made remarkable progress in diverse fields. The whole gamut of bilateral cooperation can be discussed under four categories: political, strategic, military and others. At the political level the new found warmth was reflected in the frequent exchange of high level visit between the two countries. In the due course of time Indo-Israeli strategic relation's assumed new dimension which encompassed three aspects: defence supplies, internal security and counter terrorism.

The cooperation between India and Israel in areas such as economy and agriculture is now growing rapidly, covering trade technology transfer as well as investment into industries. Defence and military co-operation between the two countries has been a key component of the strategic relationship. Israel has emerged as a major supplier of high tech military equipment to India over the years. India constitutes Israel's third largest export market for arms and defence equipment.

India's liberalization policies and globalization strategies make Israel well positioned to fulfil the economic and technical demands of India's rapidly developing economy. Israel's achievement in agricultural technologies as well as better industrial known-how, combined with India's large pool of scientific and technical personnel, create a bigger scope for cooperation in the sphere of culture and tourism also. Both countries are showing an encouraging response to each other and are seen to be making efforts to come closer.

The study divided into four chapters which primarily focuses the various aspects and dimensions of India relations with Israel since 1991.

The **first chapter**, India's relations with Israel from 1948 to 1992 is the introductory one which traces the evaluation of the Indo-Israel relation and highlights the main events that compelled India to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel which were, Gulf war which seriously undermined the unity of the Arab World, end of the Cold War, an urgent need for better relations with the US and Pakistan propaganda amongst West Asian states in order to establish an Islamic bloc and internationalise the Kashmir issue and lack of support from the Arab countries during the India-Pakistan wars, etc.

The **second chapter** covers the most important aspect of the Indo-Israel relations, the military relations. In the military field, former Soviet Union affected the Russian military and industrial complex, the Russian exports are export oriented and relatively low priced. Israel is a late entrant in the field of diplomatic relations with India but emerged as an important partner in the military field. Such a partnership is based on India's realistic assessment of the global and regional security environment as well as its own technological requirements. The chapter emphasizes that India-Israel military relations have grown because it is based on practical considerations as Israel is a source of high technology in military and India requires it and is a good market for Israel.

The **third chapter** discusses in detail into Israel cooperation in the fields of agriculture, tourism and culture. Israel is a world leader in agro-technological accessories and India being an agricultural country could benefit from Israel a lot. Ever since the normalization of relations the tourism between the two countries have increased. There has been a boost to the cultural contracts too.

The **fourth chapter**, 'Trade, Science and Technology cooperation discusses the technological interdependence of India and Israel on each other. Beside agriculture, trade, science and technology too assumes greater dimension in the bilateral cooperation between both the countries. Way back in 1993 an agreement on science and technology was signed between the two states during the visit of the then Israeli foreign minister Simion Peres. This agreement stood for direct scientific and technological cooperation between governmental agencies academies of science, research institutes, enterprises and institutions of higher education and scientific communities of the two states.

In the last but not least is the concluding part of the entire study, where the major observations and findings are summed up.

The Research Questions

The general questions examined in the study emphasize India's changing position, perception and policy with regard to Israel in different international political contexts. Along with this, the study tries to examine, why India made a policy-shift on

Israel? What are the prospective dimensions of Indo-Israeli cooperation? And what is the strategic implication of Indo-Israeli relations?

Hypotheses

The present study sets forth the following hypotheses:-

- 1) India's Israel policy was conditioned by several factors: social, political, economic, religions and strategic ones. However, in the course of time, domestic and other strategic considerations outweighed the others. Such factors continue to limit Indo-Israeli relations even after the establishment of diplomatic relations.
- 2) Though the Government of India could defend her traditional policy on Israel, it was really preparing for a shift in its policy on Israel. However, the changes in international politics, development in West Asia and the impact of Globalization were the immediate causes for a reconsideration of such a policy shift. In a sense these developments did help the India to overcome the gravity of criticism on the policy shift.
- 3) India's political, economic and strategic interests in West Asia continue to be the same, inspite of the phenomenal change in international politics. At the same time, the emerging realities in the global scenario and its impact on the region compelled New Delhi to a policy shift, vis-à-vis Israel. In the changed context, Israel has turned out to be a strategic and balancing factor. India's response to these contradictory interests will decide the merit and dynamism of her foreign policy in the coming years.

Review of Literature

Review of literature is the mandatory part of any serious and systematic research work. It has become an imperative one since it helps:-

- I) To develop a general explanation for observed variations in a behaviour or phenomenon,
- II) To identify the potential relationship between concepts and to identify reasonable hypotheses.

- III) To learn how others have defined and measured key concepts?
- IV) To identify data sources that others researchers have used?
- V) To develop alternative research designs.
- VI) To discover how a research work is related to the work of others.

P. R. Kumarswamy has made his Ph.D thesis on India's Israel policy. But this study is seen confined to some of the early decisions taken by India on prior to 1980. It is a good endeavour on the part of the author, since he could provide a good number of primary documents for the succeeding Research Scholars.

Farah Naaz, another scholar has also done some investigation in this direction. Though her study "West Asia and India: Changing Perspective" is a general inquiry on India's strategic position on West Asia. It also helped in assessing India's diplomatic behavior and strategic calculations vis-à-vis Arab states.

The work of Anwar Alam, "India, Global Powers and West Asia", deals with evolving political and economic dynamics and interactions of India with global and regional powers in West Asia. It examines India's multidimensional relations with global powers such as the USA, Russia, China and regional powers and organisations like Iran, Israel, Turkey and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) respectively.

Considering the peculiar significance and the sensitive nature of the topic, some of the professionals were able to provide periodic comments and reviews on the subject. Among them the names of M.S. Agwani, Bansidhar Pardhan, J.N. Dixit, R. Shreekantan Nair are worth mentioning.

Methodology

The proposed study has been made relying on the case study method. However, as per the requirements of the different context, a few other methods have also resorted to. For instance, Document analysis method has been adopted while examining various reports, agreements and related documents of the Government of India and the State of Israel. Besides, as the study otherwise demanded, Historical and Analytical methods have also been considered.

The study is based on bilateral relationship between India and Israel. There are a number of factors contributing to the relationship between the two states. The positive development in the West Asia is a direct factor responsible for close ties between the two countries. As such, any setback to the peace process may create a reasonable gap in the relationship between New Delhi and Tel Aviv.