

## ABSTRACT

The year 1992 marked a significant change in the foreign policy of India towards Israel that had been lying dormant for nearly four decades. Some important events on the geo-strategic front of the Middle East countries such as Arab, Iran, Iraq and Palestine, etc., compelled India to mull its stand on diplomacy with Israel once against. The state of Israel established in 1948, was recognized by India on September 18, 1950, but the two countries established full diplomatic relations on January 29, 1992. The event that compelled India to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel was Gulf War, which seriously undermined 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 in 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.

The establishment of diplomatic relations and the transformation of Indian policy on Israel are considered by India as one of the most important milestone in Indian diplomacy

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. Above all, India could not resist acknowledging the fact that by the end of 1980s, Israel had become one of the top most manufacturer and exporter of advanced and sophisticated military and defence equipment to many third world countries. Therefore, India could not afford to lose the

opportunity of shaking hands with Jerusalem and thus foreign relations between India and Israel took an upward turn.

For Israel, a close multifaceted bond with India would have significant political, diplomatic and strategic benefits. Indian support for beleaguered Israel on the international stage would significantly contribute to dispersing much of the animosity manifested towards it by many international organizations and help it break out of the cycle of censure whenever it endeavours to defend its vital interests assertively (Indeed, Israel only seems to receive international approval when it accedes to the demands and pressures of those urging concessions from it). Strategic collaboration would allow Israel to broaden the base of its strategic reliance. It should however be clear that at least in the foreseeable future, such collaboration can be expected only to augment and complement, rather than supplant or replace, Israel's reliance on the US. It could broadly follow the lines of growing Turkish –Israeli cooperation, which would dispel any basis for construing it as “anti-Muslim”.

India and Israel have shared much in common during the last six decades. They share common bedrock of parliamentary democracy, common law structures, liberal educational systems, knowledge of the English language and a history of British colonialism. India and Israel as functioning democracies have survived in a sea of hostility surrounded by implacable adversaries and a heavily militarised security environment. Both nations have fought wars in every decade of their existence. Both countries face external and internal security threats in the form of terror attacks from terrorist groups.

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: military, strategic, trade, agriculture, science and technology. At the political level the new found warmth was reflected in the frequent exchange of high level visits 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.

“Military” emerged as the most important area of mutual cooperation between the two countries. In this area, the erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) had been a strong and a traditional associate of India. Though the fall of the

USSR affected the Russian military manufacturing capabilities, the arms manufactured in Russia were export- oriented and moderately priced. Israel's experience gained during its long war-torn history would be invaluable to India in bolstering security and helping it repel aggressors. Israel's expertise in border surveillance, sensor technology and electronic detection could contribute towards prevention of undetected incursions into sensitive regions along the Indian frontier, as occurred in Kashmir. On the strategic military plane, there is emerging recognition that Indo-Israeli collaboration will yield synergic mutual benefits, allowing each to reach objectives neither can on its own. Given the present (and probably future) economic constraints on both sides, India's quest for independence in technological expertise and Israel's need to maintain a sizeable defence industry to preserve its qualitative superiority over adversaries are goals likely to be beyond either's reach individually.

The cooperation between India and Israel in areas such as the economic and agriculture started off with the simple exchange of commodities which is now growing rapidly, covering trade, technology transfer as well as investments into industry. Considering the fact that the two economies are complementary to each other, coupled with an investor friendly environment, the future of trade relations looks bright. As a result of this facilitation, the trade volume between India and Israel has risen by an average of 50% every year from 1992 to 1999. The two way trade had grown steadily from US \$ 202 million in 1992 to US \$ 1004 million in 2000 and in 2010 it reached US \$ 3087 million. 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 know-how, combined with India's large pool of scientific and technical personnel, create a bigger scope for cooperation. Israel's expertise in agricultural technology, Agro-Tech, is well known for the world. They have developed remarkable sophistication and expertise in water management methods, especially in drip-irrigation techniques, meant to fight water logging and salinity. This has been one of the focuses of Indian attraction. Moreover, in India, Israeli technology is preferred to European technology on account of almost similar geographical conditions. 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.

It is important that both countries should be able to appreciate each other's culture which is possible only when there is people to people contact. This requires giving a boost to the tourism sector as well. This is going to benefit the academic community as well as the larger society in learning not only about each other's culture but also various other fields.

The manner in which India managed to defend its national interest is a classical instance. Paradoxically, the peculiar features of domestic political system inflicted its own impact on India's diplomatic behaviour. All these are strange and interesting phenomenon which the present study has attempted to look into. The following findings are the offspring of the study.

1. The visible shift to domestic, strategic and other considerations, in-lieu of the ethos of social and political aspects which remained the conventional factor in India's traditional policy on Israel gave a thrill and thrust to Indo-Israeli relations.
2. India was in a sound political position when she opposed the creation of the State of Israel. But such a position lost its gravity, when Israel became a member of the U.N. in 1949. The tenants of International Law also demanded a shift in the position of India.
3. Non-establishment of diplomatic tie at the time of recognition was a lapse on the part of Indian political leadership by which it wilfully allowed some domestic and other regional (West Asian) factors to influence her diplomatic behaviour. Such a deliberate lapse eventually met India's national interest in different ways.
4. The political behaviour of the State of Israel, the aggressive policies it adopted after the Suez Crisis and the sensitive dimension the issue assumed at home inhibited India from forging diplomatic ties with Israel. The earlier political position turned insignificant in the context of 'real politik' of the region. This is exposed when we look at India's covert relation with Israel during times of its national crises.
5. During the period of non-political relationship with Israel, though India was defending its traditional Israel policy, she was really preparing for a policy shift. The changes in international politics and the subsequent political developments in West-Asia were only immediate causes, for the same were the culmination of a

dual policy followed over all these periods. However, these changes did help India to overcome the domestic criticism on the policy shift.

6. The most political aspect of Indo-Israel relation is security and defence related co-operation. In spite of higher frequency of defence related cooperation on a variety of areas, both governments deliberately put things in a confidential manner. If explored fully, without any inhibition, such a tie would help India meet many of its immediate security challenges in the sub-continental and regional contexts.
7. Indo-Israeli relations have flourished within a short span of time in many traditional areas of mutual cooperation. At the same time, India deliberately did not allow her commitment to the Arab world in general and the Palestinian cause in particular to suffer. On the other hand, India maintained a very balanced diplomatic schedule in West-Asia. This is a very positive symptom and a mature way of exercising diplomacy. India should develop the tendency to the tune of making use of the full potential of Indo-Israeli relations, especially in defence related areas.
8. India's simultaneous response to the needs and aspirations of the two pole ends of the forces of West-Asian region will have far-reaching implications to her national interests in the coming years. It would certainly decide the dynamics of India's foreign policy.

25The growing ties between these two nations which have even been termed as 'natural alliance', though, doesn't come without the cautionary note pointed out by some serious observers of international politics who rightly view power in international relations in broader sense. According to this view, in the immediate context of growing Indo- Israel ties, what came at stake was India's philosophical base of its foreign policy. Enlightened self interest must obviously be the guiding principle of the foreign policy of any country, but, that enlightened national interest must be formulated with a broader mind and a visionary outlook. The immediate compulsions of the international geopolitics, should pragmatically, not blur the long term vision of the philosophical base of any nation's foreign policy. In the history of nations, it is sometimes very important to stand for something which may not be so fruitful in the immediate context.