CONCLUSIONS
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India and Burma are close neighbours. Relations between these two countries during the years 1948-62, marked an important phase as far as their friendship, co-operation and mutual help was concerned. Centuries old geographical, cultural and strategic links between these two Asian neighbours coupled with mutual economic interests and identical foreign policy made their relationship a notable example of friendship. Role of Indian immigrants in Burma added another important dimension to their bilateral relationship.

Historically, both India and Burma had a common past. Both tasted the bitter fruits of British imperial authority; India during 1857-1947 and Burma during 1886-1948. Once under the grip of British colonialism both India and Burma underwent many social, economic and political changes. Till 1937, Burma was a part of British India and was ruled under the Western concept of government and politics imposed by Britishers. Thus it was under one political framework that the administration of both India and Burma had been carried on. The large scale economic exploitation by the British of their colonies generated strong anti-British feeling in India and Burma leading ultimately to the years of struggle for freedom.

Events taking place in India during its fight for independence affected the developments in Burma. The boycott, the satyagraha, and the legislative walk out were the techniques of political agitation that reached from India to Burma. On
various stages of their struggle, the nationalist leaders of India and Burma co-operated with each other and offered joint resistance to the British in order to achieve independence. The Indian National Congress became a source of inspiration and guidance for the young Thakins of Burma who had then become popular agitationists in their country. A Thakin delegation led by Aung San attended the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress in March 1940. One of the facets of Indo-Burmese co-operation against the British was the Azad Hind Government that had been originally established in Singapore by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and later shifted to Rangoon. Many Indians living in Burma and a large number of Burmese too enrolled themselves in the force organized by Netaji. Apart from Netaji two other Indian leaders, viz. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi influenced the minds of Burmese leaders and course of Burma's freedom struggle. India's support for Burmese independence was not one-sided. Similar sentiments of sympathy towards India's struggle for independence were reciprocated by Burmese nationalists. In the long run both India and Burma succeeded in achieving independence from the British colonial rule -- the former in 1947 and the latter a year after. Once independent, these two Asian neighbours developed a relationship that had obvious foundations in their old association during the pre-colonial period.

India and Burma had many other common factors which played a vital role in determining their relations. These factors, besides colonial legacies, identical value systems and personality orientation of post-independence leadership,
were geographical situation, cultural links, economic activities and foreign policy matters. Geographically, India and Burma share a mountainous common boundary of nearly one thousand four hundred and fifty kilometers from its southern extremity to its northern end which in fact is the tri-junction of the boundaries between India, Burma and China. Various tribes inhabiting the border areas played an important role in influencing Indo-Burmese relations. On the other side, the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal were important because movement by sea to the Irrawaddy delta channels was far easier and of greater importance for Burma. It was through the sea that most of the trading activities and cultural interaction between India and Burma had taken place. The strategic location of China was yet another geographical factor to be kept in mind because Burma’s position was that of a buffer state between the two big Asian neighbours -- India and China.

The most important determinant that for centuries had played a role in Indo-Burmese relations was the cultural factor. Burma was one of the first few countries that came in contact with India and its civilization. Through years of contact, India’s culture, religion, art, literature, language, dance forms etc. reached Burma and influenced the Burmese way of life. Of all, it was Buddhism by virtue of its liberal approach and national outlook that affected the Burmese society most. The Hindu influence could be seen distinctly in the field of architecture, literature, paintings, dance and music.

Mutual economic activities between India and Burma was a significant factor to determine their relations. Trading
activities between the two countries and the role of Indian immigrants in Burma were the most important economic factors. After independence, both the colonially exploited under-developed countries took up earnestly the task of rebuilding their shattered economy. So their post-independent economic objectives were more or less the same.

Politically, both India and Burma had many things in common. First being ruled by various dynasties, both later came under one colonial rule. It was one political framework that governed both India and Burma and hence administrative structure and laws were identical. Emergence of political parties in India and Burma had also many similarities. After independence both opted for democratic form of government in which it was the elite that dominated the scene. What lied at the root of harmonious and mutually advantageous bilateral relations between India and Burma during the post-independence period was the perfect understanding at the leadership level. Equally important was India's primary in the sub-continent that came under clouds only after its conflicts with China in October 1962.

Common approach in foreign policy was yet another factor which influenced Indo-Burmese relations. Both believed in the policy of non-alignment which aimed at keeping away from power-bloc rivalry. Not only that, both strongly campaigned for such a foreign policy whenever they found an opportunity, be it a regional meeting or an international conference. Quite often, however, both in emphasis and in practice their respective foreign policies made significant variations.
In the post-independence period, many political developments took place in which India and Burma shared each other's views and sought each other's co-operation. In order to understand Indo-Burmese relations, a review of their co-operation on bilateral, regional and global level has to be done. On bilateral level, mutual help, visits of Indian leaders to Burma and vice versa, personal friendship between Nehru and U Nu and signing of friendship treaty were the major developments. Immediately after independence, when Burma was threatened by a civil war India gave financial and military assistance to the Government of Burma so that the latter tackles the internal problem smoothly. A noteworthy development in their bilateral relations was the signing of the Indo-Burmese Friendship Treaty on 7 July 1951 which was hailed as a landmark by the people and Government of India and Burma alike. Signing of the treaty was followed by frequent visits by the Burmese Premier to India. Issues of mutual interest such as Japanese Peace Treaty, presence of Kuomintang troops in Burmese territory, trade between the two countries etc. were discussed during those visits. As far as mutual security was concerned, Indo-Burmese border never posed a serious problem. Although Naga uprising on the Indo-Burmese frontier and occurrence of incidents of border violations by Indian army created some uneasiness throughout 1950s, these were too insufficient to seriously damage their mutual relations.

On regional level, the objectives of India and Burma were manifold, viz. to strengthen friendship with the neighbours,
to champion the independence struggle of the colonized countries of Asia and to campaign for the peace and security of the region. In this connection, three important developments such as the emergence of People's Republic of China as a strong neighbour of both India and Burma, the freedom struggle in Indonesia and the crisis in Indo-China bear significant relevance. Realising the importance of the emergence of Communist China, both India and Burma tried to befriend their colossal neighbour. They not only recognized the new regime, but later gave political support to China on various issues. For example, both advocated the entry of China into the United Nations and supported China's claim over Formosa. Initially, China reciprocated up to expectation and thus started a phase of India-China-Burmese friendship and co-operation. The then prevailing international situation particularly the creation of the SEATO by the United States of America, helped in the development of such a phase. Later however, border violation and armed clash between Indian and Chinese forces on the one hand and Burmese and Chinese forces on the other, gave a stunning blow to the phase of friendship between these three neighbours. Ultimately, Burma signed a border agreement with China while India had to fight a war against the Chinese in 1962.

Both India and Burma supported the Indonesians in their struggle against the Dutch rule. Two military actions in 1947 and 1948 respectively by the Dutch against the Indonesians met with vehement opposition from India and Burma who raised their voice for the first time at the First Asian Relations Conference
held in New Delhi in 1947. Later they raised the issue at the United Nations so that it got an international hearing. Finally, it was at the Second Asian Relations Conference that the leaders of India and Burma gave the Indonesian problem the colour of an all-Asian issue. Joint Indo-Burma efforts coupled with the relentless struggle of the Indonesians ultimately brought independence to Indonesia.

Approaches of India and Burma towards the Indo-Chinese crisis were slightly of different nature because here the crisis had manifold implications. The crisis which initially started as a case of Vietminh freedom fighters vs. French imperialism, later assumed broader dimensions due to power bloc intervention. India and Burma, unlike their support to the Indonesians at the official level, did not take any official stand as far as the Vietminh was concerned. But in view of their commitment to the cause of freedom and decolonization, they lent moral support to the Vietnamese and condemned French colonialism. When the question of recognition to Ho-Chi Minh regime arose, both India and Burma opted for a neutral stand. Later, realising the seriousness of the crisis, they tried to influence the proceedings of the Geneva Conference by putting proposals through the Colombo Conference (April-May 1954) that aimed at a peaceful solution of the crisis. In connection with the implementation of the Geneva Agreements India had a significant role to play because it accepted the responsibility of acting as the chairman of the International Commission of Supervision and Control. In 1957, when India opened consular relations with
both the Vietnams, Burma continued to exchange goodwill mission with North and South Vietnam. But at the same time both India and Burma refused to accept 17th parallel as the demarcation line between North and South Vietnam and stuck to their stand that the two Vietnams be reunified.

In conformity with their keen interest in regional issues, both India and Burma organised and participated in many regional conferences. Foremost among those were the First Asian Relations Conference (1947), the Second Asian Relations Conference (1949), the Asian Socialist Conferences (1953, 1956) and the Bandung Conference (1955). In these conferences they discussed the problems that the newly independent countries of the region were facing and suggested measures for their solution. While initiating discussion in those conferences, India and Burma had common objectives of support to liberation movements and opposition to colonialism, co-operation and solidarity among the Afro-Asian countries and promotion of peace in the area. These objectives were amply reflected in the speeches of the Indian and Burmese representatives who sought solution to the problems in the form of recommendations, resolutions and communiques etc.

In all the regional conferences India and Burma maintained basically a common stand. The First Asian Relations Conference that started at the initiative of Pandit Nehru and support of General Aung San of Burma, marked the beginning of co-operation among Asian nations. The Second Asian Relations Conference that was held in Delhi
under Nehru's leadership was in many ways an initiative of U Nu, the Prime Minister of Burma. Here the representatives of both the countries voiced their concern about Indonesia whose freedom had been imperilled by Dutch colonialism. Indonesian issue apart, they advocated for a common platform through which they would air the grievances of the oppressed Asian nations.

The Asian Socialist Conference held in Rangoon during 6-15 January 1953 and the Second Congress of the Asian Socialist Conference held in Bombay during 1-10 October 1956, had been represented by socialist delegates from both India and Burma. Sounding a typical socialist tone, the discussions in these socialist conferences were mainly directed to problems like fight against colonialism, rivalry among power blocs and imbalance in world economy. Of all the conferences, the most significant one was held at Bandung from 18 April to 24 April 1955. Among the representatives of twenty nine countries of Asia and Africa who participated in this conference were the Prime Ministers of India and Burma. These two Asian leaders worked hard to propagate the concept of non-alignment which in their view was the best policy to be followed at a time when world politics had been charged with tension. They jointly advocated that adherence to the "Five Principles of Panchsheel" was the best way to avert cold war tension. One positive result of the Bandung Conference was the fact that Nehru and U Nu were able to get an assurance from Chou En-lai for China's adherence to "Panchsheel" in conducting relations with Afro-Asia, particularly the neighbouring countries.
India and Burma took a joint stand on many global issues also. This was possible primarily because they both belonged to the non-aligned movement. The post-war period, being one of cold war politics, India and Burma thought it expedient to follow the policy of non-alignment. As keen believer in this policy they tried to bring more and more countries to the non-aligned camp. They held more or less a common viewpoint while participating in the United Nations and other international forums in respect of their stand on anti-colonialism, anti-racialism and maintenance of world peace.

During the period 1948-62, both India and Burma actively participated in various debates of the UN General Assembly to find out solution for many international crises such as the Korean crisis, Suez crisis and Hungarian crisis expressing identical views. For the restoration of peace in Korea, both India and Burma favoured the strengthening of the UN Commission on Korea but opposed the crossing of the 38th parallel by the UN troops. They also took a common stand about the unification of North and South Korea. As far as the Suez crisis was concerned, they criticized Israeli-Anglo-French military venture in Egypt in October 1956 which in fact had precipitated the crisis. Aiming at a peaceful solution, they strongly opposed foreign intervention and asked for immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces that had been involved in the Suez crisis. They took a similar stand on the Hungarian crisis where the Soviet armed forces had intervened. They along with Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Indonesia submitted a joint draft resolution on 10 December 1956 expressing deep concern over the tragic
situation in Hungary and sought withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. However, it would not be fully correct to say that India and Burma always spoke with one voice on international matters. Unlike the Suez crisis where India strongly condemned the invasion of Anglo-French-Israeli troops, it mildly criticized the Russian action in Hungary. Burma on the other hand severely condemned the Russian intervention in Hungary. Such variations in their approach had in fact been dictated by their respective national interests.

The most notable forum for India and Burma to project their foreign policies was the non-aligned movement. Hence the role of India and Burma at the first non-aligned conference which took place at Belgrade in 1961 during the period under study needs some attention to understand Indo-Burmese relations on the global level. The delegates at Belgrade which included the Indian Prime Minister and the Burmese Premier discussed in detail issues like colonialism, racial discrimination, disarmament, foreign intervention and world peace. They jointly agreed to explore avenues through which the economic progress of the under-developed countries could be attained.

In the evaluation of Indo-Burmese relations, the role of Indian immigrants in Burma needs special mention because they had been playing a significant role in the economic, political and social life of Burma since the beginning of Christian era. Originally starting as commercial merchants, the Indians gradually influenced the socio-religious life of the Burmese. By nineteenth century they began to play an important economic role because of the British encouragement
of cheap Indian labour to the Irrawaddy delta for the expansion of rice cultivation. From 1886 when Burma became a province of Indian empire till its separation in 1937, there was virtually no restriction on the flow of Indian immigrants to Burma. But Ba Maw administration's cry, "everything in Burma belongs to Burmans" during the Japanese occupation period affected the interests of the Indian immigrants and checked their flow into Burma. After independence, promulgation of many legislative measures by the Government of Burma further regulated and controlled the flow of the Indian immigrants.

As sea was the route of migration from India to Burma, most of the earlier migrants came from Madras and Bengal. Later, migrants though in small number started coming from distant places like the Central Provinces, North-West Provinces and the Punjab. All the migrants can be covered broadly under three groups, viz. the big businessmen or merchant class like the Chettiyars, the middle class intellectuals like the doctors, engineers, teachers and lawyers, and the labour class both skilled and unskilled workers. Of the three, it were the Chettiyars and the labourers that played the most crucial role by making their presence felt in practically all branches of Burmese economy such as moneylending, banking, insurance, industry, shipping, transport, construction works etc.

Originally starting their career as moneylenders, the Chettiyars gradually acquired considerable amount of cultivable land in Lower Burma and made further investment in urban property and business. The labourers on the other hand initially began to earn their livelihood as migratory labourers to work in the
rice fields of Burma. Gradually they settled for a longer period and expanded their sphere of activities to road construction, transport etc. The combined economic monopoly of these two groups plus the administrative role of the Indians who were in Burmese bureaucracy was bound to affect the natives' interests. Finding it difficult to compete with the Indians, the Burmese gradually developed anti-Indian feelings which culminated in the form of anti-Indian riots in 1938 and further affected the relations between the two countries in the post-independence period.

In the post-independence period, the Indians living in Burma seldom tried to join the social mainstream of the Burmese. Rather they tried to maintain a separate identity by speaking their respective languages and adhering to their own social customs. Such an isolating attitude alienated them further in the eyes of the Burmese people. As a result, there occurred a marked decline in the political and economic role of the Indian immigrants during the years 1948-62. The Burma Immigration (Emergency) Provisions Act (1947) and subsequent measures not only restricted the activities of the Indians in Burma but also created problems for their citizenship and nationality. Legislations like Tenancy Standard Rent Act, Transfer of Immovable Property Restriction Act, and the Land Nationalization Act plus measures like foreign exchange control, put an end to the economic dominance of the Indians and also created irritating situation in respect of compensation for the property nationalized by the Government of Union of Burma.
The measures introduced by the Government of Burma to curb the economic role of the Indian immigrants, met with strong protest from the Indians both in India and in Burma. Newspapers like The Hindu commented critically about the problems faced by the Indians in Burma. The Madras Legislative Assembly passed a resolution in 1948 expressing grave concern about the deteriorating position of Indians in Burma. Subsequently a delegation of Chettiyar Association that represented the Indians in Burma, came to New Delhi and submitted a memorandum raising their problems and suggested measures for their solution. All these could not change the situation. Although the Government of India was well aware of the implications of the various legislations that affected the status of Indians in Burma, it did not try to make a political issue out of that. Keeping in view the overall context of Indo-Burmese relations, the Government of India dealt the matter with restraint. It sent many representations to Rangoon and subsequently sent a delegation to negotiate a proper settlement. But the Government of Burma refused to give any promise regarding the implementation of the recommendations as envisaged in the proposals of the memorandum presented by the Chettiyar Association. Such a stand on the part of the Burmese Government, however, did not damage the mutual relations between India and Burma.

The most significant aspect in Indo-Burmese relations was their economic ties. Indo-Burmese trading activities before and after independence, India's aid to Burma and
Indo-Burmese debt settlement were the major links in their economic activities.

Trading activities between India and Burma was in full swing before independence. Presence of the leading trading community, Chetiyars in Burma effected the volume of trade between the two countries. India continued to remain the major trading partner of Burma even after separation in 1937. India exported to Burma items like jute, tobacco, textile, coal, iron, steel and consumers' articles like drugs and medicines. From Burmese side came large quantities of rice, petroleum products and timber. A trade agreement between India and Burma in 1941 placed their trading activities in a more organized way. But the coming of the Second World War disrupted the whole arrangement.

After independence, with the signing of a trade agreement in 1951, started a new phase in Indo-Burmese trade relations based on mutually advantageous trade and economic collaboration. Burma's trading policy after independence was directed towards earning as much foreign exchange as possible through the sale of rice and rice products to support its new economic policies. Here, India as the traditional customer provided Burma a very favourable market. India even went to the extent of signing a significant rice agreement in 1954 which was termed as "much more than a commercial undertaking" and in reality "a goodwill gesture on India's part". More agreements were signed during 1956-59 with the prime objective of expanding bilateral trade and commerce.
These agreements, however, could not check the fluctuating trend in their trade. Introduction of non-traditional items like engineering goods, withdrawal of preferences set up in Indo-Burmese trade agreement of 1941, emergence of Great Britain and Japan as the competitors of India in the Burmese market, lack of comprehensive agreement on economic and technical co-operation between India and Burma, India's effort to seek alternate markets for import of rice and China's emergence as a major trade partner of Burma, particularly after 1960, were some of the factors responsible for the decline in Indo-Burmese trade.

Burma needed foreign aid and loan to bear the burden of increasing cost of internal anti-insurgency operations in 1949-50 and later to overcome the economic burden caused by a financial crisis in 1954-55. At this stage, India offered all help and appealed to Commonwealth countries to help Burma overcome the crisis by supplying arms and ammunitions and by giving loans and technical aid. It was at the initiative of the Prime Minister of India that an informal conference of the representatives of Commonwealth countries met at New Delhi on 23 February 1949 to find out avenues through which to help the Burmese Government overcome its financial difficulties. As a result in March 1950 a Commonwealth aid programme was approved to give Burma a loan of £6 million out of which India's share was £1 million and this was interest free. Apart from this loan India and United Kingdom jointly decided to offer an advance of Rupees 117 lakhs to the State Agricultural Board of Burma.
Later in 1955, India agreed to give another amount of Rupees ten crores as loan to Burma. All these steps undoubtedly helped the Government of Burma to tide over its immediate difficulties.

An important issue in the Indo-Burmese economic relations was the debt settlement between India and Burma. In 1954, it was announced in the Indian Parliament that an agreement had been reached about the debt that Burma owed to India under the separation agreement of 1937. According to the terms of the agreement, India had written off fifty percent of its capital plus the entire amount of interest due from Burma. Such a generous approach by the Government of India was highly appreciated by the Government of Burma. Even the Indian press hailed this as a great gesture of goodwill.

Thus, Indo-Burmese relations during the period 1948-62 was a phase of unique importance. On bilateral level, they co-operated keeping in view each other's national interests. On the global level, they worked hard for the establishment of world peace. On economic matters, they worked jointly to provide a better living to their country's population. The issue of Indian immigration in Burma, however, was viewed in the general perspective of Indo-Burmese relations.