

# **Chapter - 2**

**(Theoretical Framework and  
Research Methodology)**



## **RESEARCH PROPOSAL :**

I propose to work on the title - "India-Myanmar Strategic Relations: Since Independence" for the reason that India being the largest and strongest power in South Asia does not have a healthy and strong relations with her neighbours, but for Bhutan in the past. An attempt would be made by me to go into the root causes of this problem. Also, after studying all the relevant primary and secondary sources, I will try to analyze and thereafter, suggest as to what remedial measures to be taken, so as to improve relations, enhance cooperation, remove doubts and maintain healthy and positive relations with Myanmar. Also, through dialogues and through government to government interaction and meetings, efforts and attempts will be made to eliminate mutual difference, mistrust and to reduce or completely remove irritants between the South Eastern neighbour of India.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY :**

1. To develop means and mechanism, so as to enhance and speed up the cooperation between the two countries in the field of economics, social, cultural, scientific, health, and technological and in defence cooperation.
2. To increase collective self-dependence between the two countries.
3. To develop mutual confidence, as well as to evaluate and analyse various problems between the two countries.
4. To cooperate and support each others interests at international forums and to develop harmony and cooperation in strengthening multifarious relations between the two countries.

5. To cooperate with regional and international forums on common issues and areas of interest.
6. To develop further cooperation in the areas of security, trade and to enhance existing infrastructures and besides, to bring more closer cooperation in the areas of oil and natural gas, agriculture, railway, power and energy between the two countries.
7. To assist and cooperate with each other in eliminating cross-border terrorism and various terrorist groups operating against each other, from both the countries.

#### **APPROACH TO THE STUDY :**

The approach to the study would involve attempting to answer the primary and secondary questions using a critical/analytical framework and on the basis of collection of primary and secondary source material.

Myanmar, despite its critical importance for India's security, India's 'Look East Policy' and the stability imperative for the North East, did not receive as much attention and importance as it should have got. One appears to have forgotten that Myanmar borders four of our insurgency prone states in North East - Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. Part of the reason was that Myanmar had undergone long periods of insurgency and had suffered international isolation. During its years of isolation, China's influence in the country had grown, while India's engagement in Myanmar had reduced. Myanmar is the only ASEAN country that shares land border with India and thus acts as a land bridge between India and South East Asia. In recent years, there was a renewed momentum in the

India-Myanmar relations with focus on development, cooperation in infrastructure, connectivity, human resources and capacity building. Both India and Myanmar faced problems from the separatist/terrorist groups from across Indian's North Eastern States, ranging from Assam and Manipur to Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

### **RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY :**

Myanmar's ongoing reforms and the country's diplomatic opening had signaled a period of great consequences in international relations. An isolated country in the past is presently, the centerpiece of prospective international investments and a fundamental component of what is being called the 'Great Game East'. Myanmar's geographical proximity to the two Asian powers, India and China, inevitably makes it a major part of their strategic calculations and now, with America's recent overture towards it, the Asian power game might see new dynamics.

On India's part, for reasons of vital national security and geo-strategy, New Delhi had to face international criticism and had to re-orient its priorities to develop good relations with the military ruled Myanmar. Situated just across the disturbed eastern border, prudence demanded Indian policy makers to develop cooperation with the military junta. Further, New Delhi's 'Look East Policy' now 'Act East Policy' warranted a pragmatic relationship with Myanmar that served as a gateway to South East Asia.

Both India and Myanmar had, of late, made the right overtures and moves. President Thein Sein wasted no time in making a state visit to India in October 2011, once he assumed the civilian role, thus opening a new

chapter in the relationship whereas, India initiated new political steps to assist the democratic transition in Myanmar.

Later, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh made a State visit to Myanmar in 2012, which provided the field and right environment to script a new history between the two countries. Several important Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and agreements were signed between the two countries on matters of mutual interest.

There was also emerging synergy in the banking sector, which both the governments hoped to augment, thus assisting the process of identifying and removing various impediments to bilateral trade. Both sides had also emphasised on the need for strong institutional mechanisms for sharing intelligence to fight insurgency, arms smuggling and drug trafficking across the border.

There was also an increased importance accorded to defence cooperation between India and Myanmar, reflected in the continued military engagement between the two countries. With the Indian governments emerging ambitions of being a defence exporter, the controversial issue of India's supplies of military hardware to Myanmar had assumed significant dimensions.

The geo-strategic significance that was attached to Myanmar especially post its opening was not new found. Myanmar's geographical position was seen highly significant from the strategic and economic point of view. The most involved nation with a strong presence in Myanmar by

far had been China, while, the rest of the international community especially the West and U.S. in particular, imposed sanctions on a military ruled Myanmar. China over looked the nature of governing system and had developed close ties with Myanmar. Besides China and USA, other important external players which attempted to make an entry in to Myanmar include Japan, South Korea and other South East nations.

Therefore, it was crucial that India placed more significance by engaging with Myanmar and take advantage of the existent, yet slow reforms undergoing in the nation. Although, India had questioned the efficacy of Myanmar's policy towards the separatist elements within its territory, which directly effected India's internal security with respect to the North Eastern Indian States, it was important that India continued its engagement policy towards Myanmar.

India had especially faced trouble in balancing its policy of supporting the democracy movement and simultaneously expanding economic and strategic engagement with the military regime in Myanmar. India for instance saw Myanmar as a tool for building better relations with South East Asia and for controlling its north east insurgency problem while, Myanmar sought to diversify its foreign policy and reduce reliance on China. Moreover, as India's power and influence steadily increased in the region and beyond, it increasingly found more and more areas of collision with a fellow rising neighbour like China.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS :**

An attempt will be made by me to find solutions to the problematic issues or irritants which are lingering and hampering the cordial relations between the two countries.

### **(1) Primary Questions :**

- (i) To enhance Indian influence in Myanmar and thereby, negate China's domination in the country.
- (ii) To help in the establishment of a stronger democracy in Myanmar.

### **(2) Secondary Questions :**

- (i) To cooperate jointly to eliminate the smuggling of narcotics, drugs and in the illegal trade of small weapons.
- (ii) To work hand-in-hand with Myanmar to permanently solve the ethnic issue/problem.
- (iii) To strive for better economic and security relations with ASEAN countries through Myanmar.
- (iv) To have a joint strategy for eliminating various insurgent groups based in Myanmar and operating against India in North East region.
- (v) To jointly work and cooperate with Myanmar for finding a permanent solution to the refugee problem.

- (vi) To find means/solutions to curb and eliminate cross-border terrorism.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

My research proposal entitled "India-Myanmar Strategic Relations: Since Independence" will be based on collection of relevant materials, both primary as well as secondary sources from different libraries and research centers and web sites situated across the country. The methodology for examining the various issues will be that of 'Critical Historical Analysis', which in fact, is most suitable in the study of "India-Myanmar Strategic Relations: Since Independence."

### **RESEARCH DESIGN:**

This research aims to explore the possibility of military aspects, regional geopolitics and economic competition catalysed by misperceptions ensuring that India-Myanmar relations remains competitive in nature, leading to enhancement of India's influence in Myanmar. This shall be attempted by analysing the military and strategic manifestation of China's influence and understanding impact of increasing geopolitical influence of China in Myanmar. Attempts will also be made to analyse and comprehend the future prospects of India's cooperation with Myanmar and how to diminish or minimise Chinese influence in Myanmar.

### **RESEARCH LIMITATIONS:**

Perceived limitations for research in this topic is likely the draw-back to personally interact with experts on the subject other than in India and also the inability to interact and interview the various active insurgent groups of

their view on the problem/movement. Besides, the helplessness to ascertain the authenticity of all data available for research of the secondary sources.

### **LIBRARIES TO BE CONSULTED :**

For collecting the relevant primary and secondary sources material I visited and consulted besides the Departmental library of the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies and the Central library of University of Allahabad. I had also visited Public Library and the Library of G.B. Pant Institute of Social Studies, both situated at Allahabad. I had also visited the following libraries situated in New Delhi - Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, India International Centre, Nehru Memorial, Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS), Ministry of Home Affairs, Parliament House, Ministry of External Affairs, Jawaharlal Nehru University, DRDO, USI, Indian Council of Social Science Research, American Centre, Delhi University, Indian Council of World Affairs, Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, etc. Apart from the above, I had also visited the library of Centre for South and South East Asian Studies at Chennai and the National Library situated in Kolkata. Through Internet, I had also referred and scanned international newspapers, journals, periodicals and magazines for having a better and balanced view of issues on Myanmar and the role other nations are performing there.

### **HYPOTHESIS:**

The rising economic, political and growing geo-political importance of Myanmar, which was located at the crossroad between South and South East Asia and ASEAN, had redefined the landscape of Asia. The resurgence

of Myanmar and ASEAN as dominant economic powers and the greater role played by India and not overlooking USA's interest - all triggered a competition for strategic and economic space between the countries situated in Asia and in the IOR region, as well as in the emerging markets of the world. This competition with China and India in the domain of economic development, energy security and to some extent military parity would certainly had serious implications for India's national security.

#### **CHAPTERISATION:**

##### **1- Chapter I**

- Introduction

##### **2- Chapter II**

- Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

##### **3- Chapter III**

- Historical and Political Background of Myanmar

##### **4- Chapter IV**

- Role of U.S.A. and others Powers on Myanmar

##### **5- Chapter V**

- Influence / Role of China in India - Myanmar Relations

##### **6- Chapter VI**

- India - Myanmar Strategic Relations since 1947

7- **Chapter VII**

- Future Relations between and Myanmar

8- **Chapter VIII**

- Conclusions and Suggestions

9- List of Agreements / MoU between India and Myanmar

10- Annexures

11- Bibliography

\*\*\*\*\*