Free India's relationship with Britain has been influenced and shaped by a number of factors like shared historical tradition, the bond of the English language, commonality of legal and political institutions etc. India's decision to remain in the Commonwealth has helped to strengthen their old bonds and open new vistas for cooperation and development. It provided a firm basis for the maintenance of Indo-British friendship. The relationship between the two countries got evolved into a special one, and is based on mutuality and equal partnership of two leading medium powers. Their ties are quite widespread and deep rooted and encompass every conceivable facet of connection with a foreign country — political, economic, security, social and cultural.

The nature of Indo-British relations in the years 1979-91, which is the focus of the present thesis has been a decade which has been interspersed with irritants like the question of immigration and race relations and Sikh and Kashmiri militancy and disagreements over various international issues like the Russian incursion into Afghanistan, Indian Ocean, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, etc. The objective of the study is to make an in-depth analysis of the interactions between India and
Britain during this period and to arrive at a proper conclusion regarding the nature of their relationship during these years.

The significance of the thesis lies in the fact that, the period under review, 1979-91, has been a very important decade for both India and Britain. There has been governmental changes in both the countries, with Margaret Thatcher assuming Prime Ministership in Britain in 1979 and Indira Gandhi returning to power in India in January 1980. The international milieu also underwent considerable changes during these years. And, the present thesis seeks to analyse the policy changes adopted by both India and Britain in response to the changed international scenario and towards important issues of mutual concern.

This study is a product of research that was undertaken to try and analyse these changes. It has been done with the help of the mass of primary and secondary source materials available on the subject in India and Britain and also with the help of interviews of important personalities in both the countries.

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