

Model Details	
Subject Name	Political Science
Paper Name	Foreign Policy of India
Module Id Name/Title	5. India-USSR/Russia Relations
Module Id	5
Pre-requisites	
Objectives	Through this module an effort will be made to apprise the students about the true nature of India-USSR relationship and how these legacies brought this continuity ahead in the Indo-Russian ties. List of important questions and suggested readings has also been provided in this module. Keywords India-USSR
Keywords	India-USSR Relations, India-Russia Relations, Stalin's Approach, Non-alignment, Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan, Issue of Diego Garcia, Emergence of Gorbachev.
Structure of Module/Syllabus of a Module	
Evolution of the Discipline	

Role	Name	Affiliation
Principle Investigator		
Paper Coordinator		
Language Editor(LE)		

## Module – 5

### India-USSR/Russia Relations

Structure of Module
---------------------

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Various Phases of Indo-USSR Relations
  - 3.1. Beginning with Contradiction and Suspicion
  - 3.2. Close Cooperation

### 3.3 Cordial Friendship and Partnership

### 3.4. Continuity with Slight Changes

## 4. Various Phases of Indo-Russia Relations

### 4.1. From Sticky Start to Strategic Cooperation

### 4.2. From Strategic Cooperation to Strategic Partnership

## 5. Conclusion

## 6. Important Questions

## 7. Suggested Readings

### 1. Introduction

India had very old and historical ties with Soviet Union. After Independence, although India took some time to work on this positive gesture. India's membership of the Commonwealth, policy of non-alignment or Stalin's rigid approach, perhaps caused some doubts and misunderstandings in the way of better relationship. But this situation did not last long; their relations started improving with the beginning of the decade of fifty. In the Sino-Indian war of 1962, USSR extended its support to India. Again in 1965 in Indo-Pak war, it worked as facilitator and made arrangements to find out a negotiable solution. With the signing of friendship treaty in 1971, India had developed a kind of relationship with Soviet Union that it was not having with any other country in bilateral relations. Both the countries were having close ties in political, economic and defense spheres since then till the sudden demise of USSR. India had to restructure its policy in this challenging situation in the shadow of Soviet disintegration. The former had to rebuild its relations with newly independent republics especially with Russian Federation, the most powerful and sole representative of erstwhile Soviet Union in strategic manner.

### 2. Objectives

Through this module an effort will be made to apprise the students about the true nature of India-USSR relationship and how these legacies brought this continuity ahead in the Indo-Russian ties. It is a well known fact that a country's foreign policy does not evolve all of a sudden rather it is a product of numerous factors and forces. Bilateral ties between India and USSR and Russia are no exception to this phenomenon. The demise of USSR had created most serious challenges for India not only for its close ties but also from strategic and economic point of view. Russian Federation was emerging as the natural successor of Soviet legacies. There was an utmost need for India to repair relations with Russia as former still had important stakes there.

Therefore, it becomes imperative to understand and evaluate this complicated scenario. Besides, this is also important to know about the issues of convergences and divergences in these years, by doing so one can analyze the real nature of this relationship. For a better understanding of this issue, in the beginning, effort is made to analyse the Indo-USSR ties in this historical background and after that emerging Indo-Russian relations are discussed in detail.

### 3. Various Phases of Indo-USSR Relations

India was having historical ties with Soviet Union. In the pre-independence period, Nehru himself expressed desire to work with Soviet leadership during his visit to USSR in 1927. He was very impressed with Russian Revolution of 1917 and by planned economic development without any imperialistic tendency. Indian National Movement was also influenced by the Soviet ideology. After India got independence, USSR was the natural choice for bilateral relationship. In this background, IndoSoviet ties will be analyzed.

#### 3.1. Beginning with Contradiction and Suspicion

India and USSR had the common perception on the issues of international politics in post world war-II period. It was perceptible that India and Soviet Union would like to develop their bilateral relations on this envisaged line. After India got independence in 1947, this positive gesture was completely altered due to variety of reasons. The Indo-USSR ties could not develop in desired direction in the initial years. India got freedom from British Imperialism after a long battle. It was predicated that India would like to keep distance from country like Britain. But, Indian leadership had decided to stay with the membership of Commonwealth due to economic and strategic reasons. It caused irritation and suspicion in Communist block. Soviet leadership took it strategically and kept distance from India.

After the Second World War, the United State of America and Soviet Union had emerged as the Super Powers and made international politics bipolar. It was very impossible for country like India, who just attained Independence from one time super-power Britain, easily clubbed in this power game. India had decided to remain non-aligned at that juncture. It again aggravated the situation and created doubts in Soviet minds more than of western world. Soviet leader Stalin had took a tough stand on the basis of ideology. His rigid approach is based on this argument that all those who were not communists were against the Soviet Union. Besides, he was not ready to regard India as having achieved genuine independence in background of Commonwealth membership. He had given response with cold shoulder to first Indian ambassador Mrs. Vijay Luxmi Pandit designated to Soviet Union; even not given a single time appointment to meet her. This was the true reflection of this rigid approach.

#### 3.2. Close Cooperation

After the death of Stalin, new regime under the leadership of Khrushchev had followed the policy of improving their relations with third world countries. His doctrine of 'Peaceful Co-

existence' had made Soviet ideology much flexible regarding 'Third World Countries.' It had brought some type of relief in Indo-USSR contradictory stands. Both the countries now started to cooperate on bilateral issues. After the demise of Khrushchev, Indo-Soviet ties showed some reluctance, but never reached to the point of any serious dissent. On the following issues, both India and Soviet Union showed common understanding and strengthen the bilateral ties. Soviet leadership remained neutral on the issue of Kashmir in the initial years. But in this period, they had changed their stance and fully supported the Indian stand during Khrushchev and Bulganin visits to India. They declared this issue a conspiracy of imperialistic powers. Hence, they were of the view that it should be resolved bilaterally by India and Pakistan.

India had pursued the policy of 'Goa's freedom' from Portuguese' rule in 1961, and declared it India's integral part. The Soviet leader Brezhnev gave full support to Indian approach on this issue in his visit to New Delhi in same year. In UN Security Council, USSR had also used his 'Veto power' for Indian stakes.

In Indo-Pak war of 1965, Soviet leadership had remained neutral on most of the issues and tried to maintain balance between both countries. Prime Minister Kosygin had managed to sit both countries together for peaceful settlement of this issue. It resulted in 'Tashkent Agreement' between India and Pakistan.

Trade and economic ties between India and Soviet Union also started to grow in this period. Establishment of 'Bhilai Steel Plant', payment of trade in rupees, use of Atomic energy for peaceful activities and trade growth were the features of these emerging ties.

Few irritants like Suez Canal crisis, Hungary's intervention, Crisis of Czechoslovakia, Supply of arms to Pakistan and Sino-Indian war were occurred in these days where these ties testified. But the Indo-Soviet ties remained intact despite these problems.

### 3.3. Cordial Friendship and Partnership

This period proved to be the decider of very sound relationship between India and Soviet Union. Some important initiatives were taken in this period. India and Soviet Union had signed the treaty of 'Peace, Friendship and cooperation' for twenty years. This treaty became the fundamental base for the Indo-Soviet ties in coming days. This treaty was testified very soon during Indo-Pak war on the issue of Bangladesh. Soviet had not only used 'veto power' in favour of India at U.N.S.C., but also threaten other powers not to intervene in this conflict. Besides, Soviet Union had also sent its navel warheads carrier 'Kalidwastoke' and positioned it in the Bay of Bengal'. This entire emerging situation paved the way for healthy relationship between India and USSR. United State of America had established military base camp at Diego Garsia in Indian Ocean. With Indian initiatives, UNO declared the Indian Ocean as 'Zone of Peace'. This made India's perception strong and contained the activities of super power in this region. The Soviet responded positively in favour of India's initiative.

Political leadership had also played an important role in consolidation of close ties. Communist Party leader Brezhnev visited India in November 1973. Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had also paid reciprocal visit in 1976. The economic and political relationship had got a shot in arm during these visits. In most of infrastructural industries, Soviet Union was ready to provide economic and technical assistance. Both the countries had prepared the list of fifty one industries where a fruitful partnership could be attained. Besides, India launched its first ever satellite 'Aryabhata' from Soviet space centre. In the later years, Soviet foreign minister Gromyko, President Ponomarev and Prime Minister Kosygin had also visited India. From Indian side Prime Minister Morarji Dasai and foreign minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee were on the list of reciprocal visits. All these initiatives had strengthened the bilateral Indo-USSR ties in positive direction. Some roadblocks were also there in between the bilateral relations; Brezhnev's doctrine of the 'collective security of Asia', Rupee-Rubal parity rates, problem of Kampuchea and Vietnam and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan were the key issues that created some problems in India-Soviet ties.

#### 3.4. Continuity with Slight Changes

The decade of eighties had brought some type of stagnation in bilateral relations between India and Soviet Union, yet basic parameter remained intact till the demise of USSR. There were two main reasons behind this situation. India's approach towards Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan was not taken cordially by Soviet leadership. India took the stand of neutrality and gave emphasis on the recall of Soviet Army from Afghanistan without any delay. This rattled the Soviet thinking about India. The Prime Minister of India Smt. Indira Gandhi wanted to show some distance from Soviet policy especially on the issue of Afghanistan. Besides, she wanted to retain India's non-aligned posture in third world countries. It created some confusion in the Soviet Block. Despite these issues, the bilateral ties took its own course and remained continue in economic and defence partnership. Soviet foreign minister Gromyko and President Brezhnev visited India in 1980 and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi reciprocally visited in 1982. Economic and defence deals were signed in these years. During the visit of Soviet defence minister Ustinov to India, the former had decided to provide latest fighter planes, missiles and naval warheads to India

During the regime of Gorbachev, these bilateral ties showed continuities yet changed International scenario had begun to influence the bilateral ties. Indian Prime Minister went for five day's visit to Soviet Union in 1985. Both countries signed a number of treaties in the field of economic and defence and culture as well. In reciprocal visit of President Gorbachev to India in 1986, USSR declared financial loan of 2883 crore rupees on nominal interests for the renewal of certain old Indian undertakings. Besides, Soviet Union had also become ready to transfer Mig-31 fighter planes and atomic energy based marines to India. Again President Gorbachev visited India in 1988, in which Rs. 6000 crores were announced for the establishment of nuclear energy based power projects. Prime Minister of India, V.P. Singh, visited USSR in 1990, both the countries decided to renew the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty for a further period of 20 years.

Gorbachev's doctrine of 'Glasnost and Perestroika' paved the way to the end of cold war strategies. The changed relations of two Super Powers and recall of Soviet army from Afghanistan had decreased the cold war tension in political sphere. But it created a problem for India in strategic outfield. There was no space for India in this new Soviet approach. But this approach also led to the end of communist system in USSR, and finally resulted in sudden disintegration of mighty Soviet Union. It pushed India in a situation of confusion and contradictions as it had lost a close ally, guarantor and warm friend. This entire scenario made India to rethink about its foreign policy and international relations.

Main irritants occurred in this scenario were trade imbalance in favour of India, issue of Rupee-Ruble value, money deficit and demand of Dollars for payment in this last phase.

The Indo-USSR ties from early 1947 to 1991 had showed a mature understanding between the two despite some contradictions of short type nature. India had developed a kind of relationship that it did not have with any other country in bilateral relations. Both the countries had close ties in political, economic and defense spheres and remained intact till the demise of Soviet Union.

#### 4. Various Phases of Indo-Russia Relations

With the sudden demise of Soviet Union, international politics had seen dramatic scenario that no one could thought for a while before. Although eleven republics formed a new system of Commonwealth Independent States (CIS), but failed to work under a collective government or policy. Ultimately, all the republics started to function as independent state in domestic as well as external front. Russian Federation had emerged as the successor of erstwhile Soviet Union due to its size, population, natural resources, strategic location and nuclear capabilities. That's why, UNO has granted the 'Veto Power' status to Russia in place of former USSR with its inception in 1991.

India found this sudden happening very difficult to cope up with. The former had lost one time great strategic partner with the demise of Soviet Union. India had to rebuild its strategic ties in this new emerging perspective. India had started this new beginning immediately. India was among the first countries to recognize Russia as independent country and natural successor of former USSR. After that, both the countries had shown greater common understanding in bilateral ties as well as on the issues of international politics. Reciprocal visits of political leaders and army personnel, and strategic, economic and political initiatives taken in these years explain the real picture of bilateral Indo-Russian relationship. The following factors demand a common understanding between the two countries:

- i. Both, India and Russia, have regional importance and natural attraction
- ii. Both the countries have mutual stakes in Central Asia and other republics.
- iii. Shared perceptions regarding Muslim radicalism, ethnic problem and external intervention in these republics.

- iv. Role of Multi National Companies in this area and their policy of exploration of natural resources.

These were the main issues where both the countries found themselves on same side and needed bilateral understanding to cope with. Both India and Russia had done a lot to revive their relationship in this post cold war period. For better understandings, it will be better to analysis these relations in two broad spectrums: (i) From Sticky Start to Strategic Cooperation (1991-1999) and (ii) From Strategic Cooperation to Strategic Partnership (2000 onwards)

#### 4.1. From Sticky Start to Strategic Cooperation

The Indo-Russian ties began with contradictory approach. Soviet Leadership under Boris Yeltsin was busy in its internal politics. Different organs headed towards contrary directions created chaotic phase. Besides, on the foreign policy front they adopted a cautious approach seeking better relationships from all over the world. This stance decreased the importance of traditional stakeholders in Russian thinking. Russia had required US help in internal as well as external politics. Their foreign policy orientation followed these objectives. All these happenings had great ramifications for old traditional ally, India.

Political immaturity had also created some type of confusion in initial relationship. Russia decided to export arms and weapons to Pakistan and took initiatives for better friendship and cooperation with that. Besides, on Kashmir issue their approach contradicted from prior stance. This changed stance had reflected from the visit of then vice-President Alexander Rutskoi to Pakistan. His observations regarding 'Kashmir' and nuclear-free-zone in South Asia rattled the Indian side. It created some tense moments in Indian mindset. India protested strongly, although Russian Embassy clarified its unaltered stand on 'Kashmir' by official statement.

After that, both sides had tried to resolve all these contradictions and looked for warm relationship. It was reflected in the reciprocal visits of political leaders

Gennady Burbulis, foreign secretary of state of Russia, was the first dignitary from Russia who broke the deadlock in his visit to India in March 1992. The main agreements signed were:

- i. Four year economic and trade agreement.
- ii. Status of Most Favored Nation State to each other.
- iii. Establishment of joint industrial undertakings.
- iv. Assurance of delivery of Cryogenic engine for much ambitious GSLV programme.

During the visit of Defense Minister Shard Pawar, Russian counterpart had proposed the bilateral agreement for the smooth supply of spare parts and hardware for military requirements. The Chairman of Supreme Soviet (Russian Parliament) Khasbulatov asserted India 'first class' economic power and endorsed Russian desire to continue good relations with India. With the visit of President Boris Yeltsin in January 1993, all the doubts cleared off regarding Indo-Russia

close ties. A new fourteen-clause treaty similar to historic 1971 Indo-Soviet treaty of friendship and cooperation was signed. Yeltsin proposed not only 'hurdle free' supply of defense hardware and spare parts but also ready to sell T-80u tanks and Mig fighter planes. Russian leader also gave assurance to stop the supply of Mig-29 fighter planes to Pakistan. He also reaffirmed its stand in favor of India on 'Kashmir' issue. Both the countries signed 10 agreements of friendship and cooperation during this visit. The most important issues resolved during this visit were complicated Rupee-Rubal parity rates and Indian debt cut-off dates.

Reciprocal visits of Prime Minister PV Narshima Rao (1994) and Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda (1996) also further consolidated these emerging Indo-Russian ties. Russia took both these visits with higher priority and gave warm welcome to Indian leaders despite prior engagement in 'Helsinki Conferences'. This was evident from the following facts:

- i. Russia gave its consent to establish nuclear power reactor in India
- ii. Assured India the delivery of Cryogenic engine.
- iii. Four agreements related to commercial tie-up.
- iv. Persuade Ukraine not to export T-80 tanks to Pakistan.
- v. Russia, in principle, became ready to transfer technological assistance for the development of missile programme 'Aakash'.

In the shadow of Indian nuclear test in 1998, Russian Prime Minister visited India. But Russia's response was quiet mature and fully asserted towards India's stand. Both countries signed seven agreements in the fields of defense, trade, economic, industry, science, communication and air transport. Russia also gave consent to sell 'Gorshkove' warhead carrier to India

Despite all the difficulties in political and strategic sphere, economic ties between both remained un-affected most of the time. From 1991 to 1997, trade between India and Russia had shown 300 percent growth. After the settlement of two critical issues of Rupee-Rubal parity rates and Indian debt cut-off dates, trade activity had shown 43 percent jump with overall trade of \$905 million in the year of 1993-94. The hotel industry, pharmaceuticals, tea, leather goods, construction and service sector were the main areas where India was looking for. On the other hand, Russia's export included iron and steel, oil, military equipments, fertilizers, spare parts and machinery. The trade between the two countries showed the great jump during 1995-96, as it crossed \$ 1904.09 million in this year. But after that trade had shown some down fall. The total trade in the financial year of 1999-2k was of \$1572 million between two countries. Both the India and Russia tried hard to boost up trade and commercial interaction during these years. Trade protocols were signed to enhance new areas of cooperation and collaboration by the two countries during these years

#### 4.2. From Strategic Cooperation to Strategic Partnership

Indo-Russia relationship had shown great maturity in the new century. The visit of President Vladimir Putin had institutionalized the bilateral ties. Both India and Russia had signed an agreement for 'strategic partnership'. This strategic partnership was clearly evident because of:

- i. India's emergence as economic power in 21st century
- ii. Indo-Russian ties grow steadily
- iii. Mutual understanding on the regional as well as on World scenario
- iv. No serious conflict on the Nuclear issue
- v. Convergence on the security's issue

This convergence had created the environment for the cooperation in the field of political, economic, defense, science & technology and culture for a long period. This goodwill gesture could be analyzed after reviewing initiatives taken by both countries in these directions

India and Russian relationship had begun in the 21st century with a high note. Visits of political leaders, agreements and common understanding have paved the way for smooth ties. Russian President Vladimir Putin visited India in October 2000, December 2002, 2010 and 2014 for the sake of better political interaction. From Indian side Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpaie paid state visit to Russia in 2001 and 2003. Defense Ministers of Russia, Igor Ivanov, visited India in 2002 and his counterpart from Indian side, George Fernandez, visited in 2003 respectively. In April 2013, two ministers of India, Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde and Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma, visited Russia. Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, visited India in November 2013. These visits created an environment of warm relations. Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, also visited Russia in December 2009 and October 2013. Various deals and agreements were signed in the sphere of political, economic and cultural relationship. The warmth in their bilateral ties was maintained and sustained with the institutionalization of mechanism for bilateral interaction. The meets at Summit Level annually, Inter-governmental Commission on military-technical cooperation, inter-governmental commission on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation and India-Russia trade & investment forum are the institutional mechanisms which are providing opportunity to explore all the available opportunities for bilateral benefits. So far, 14th annual Summits have taken place alternatively in India and Russia.

India and Russia have signed the treaty of 'strategic partnership' during the visit of President Putin in 2000, based on the earlier treaties of 1991, 1993 and Moscow Declaration of 1994. It committed the two countries to 'no-participation in any military, political or other alliances or associations or armed conflicts directed against the other side, or in any treaties, agreements or understandings infringing upon the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity or national security interests of the other side.' This agreement gave Indo-Russian ties a great boost up in contemporary times. Besides, on the issue of 'new world order', democratization of UNSC, nuclear disarmament and improvement in international financial institutions both the countries showed common understanding in these years. On the issues of terrorism, Afghanistan crises and

security problem in Central Asia both India and Russia shared common perspective and dealt the situation with joint strategy many times.

Cooperation in defense sector is always proved the backbone of Indo-Russian ties. During the visit of President Putin in 2000, both countries signed the agreement of the delivery of heavy weapons costing \$3 billion US dollars. Russia also gave its consent to deliver Admiral Gorskove warhead carrier and T-90 tanks as early as possible. Besides, Russia also agreed to supply atomic fuel for nuclear power project despite US sanctions. Both the countries are engaged in cooperation in space technology also. India and Russia are the members of BRICS, RIC, G20, and hence collaborating at global level. Russia is also the supporter of India's inclusion in UNSC as permanent member and membership of SCO. These are the positive trends in contemporary Indo-Russia relationship

The economic sphere did not show the much enthusiasm like political and strategic interaction. Trade between the India and Russia from 2000-01 to 2007-08 has shown slight growth as it reached from 1387 million dollar to 3408 million dollar, but much below to expected line. In the year of 2010-11, the total trade showed further growth as it reached \$ 5289 US dollar. In 2014-15 the total trade ended up on \$6346 US dollar and showing some type of continuity in Indo-Russia trade relations. It was expected that after the opening of new transit rout via Iran to Russia trade activities will also show steady growth.

Besides this, Indian public sector undertaking has been working in Russia from the beginning. ONGC Videsh, state owned Indian Oil and Gas agency, has also been collaborating with Russian counterpart for a long time. Both the countries are now trying hard to improve economic ties. This is evident from President Putin's visit to India in December 2014; total 20 pacts of US \$ 100 billion were signed mainly in the nuclear energy sector. This agreement had the great importance for both sides. Fulfillment of energy demands for economic growth is the highest priority for India, on the other side; Russia got the slighter edge in ongoing competition with other contenders.

India and Russia have improved their relations a lot of in last few years, but far below from potential. The main roadblocks occurred between the two countries in these years are:

- i. Political Immaturity on the issue of Kashmir
  - ii. Rupee-Rubal parity rates
  - iii. Indian debt cut-off dates
  - iv. Supply of Cryogenic engine and American pressure
  - v. Spare part supply
  - vi. Nuclear-Free-Zone in South Asia
  - vii. Financial inadequacy
5. Conclusion

India's relations with erstwhile Soviet Union and its successor have been remarkable most of the time. They are natural allies despite whatever is happening across the world. With the signing of friendship treaty in 1971, India had developed a kind of relationship with USSR that it did not have with any other country at that time. It was the show of strength of bilateral relations in contemporary international politics. This warmth passed through several trials but never entered a bitter phase. Both the countries had collaborated with full strength in political, economic and defense spheres till the sudden demise of former USSR

India found itself in a complicated situation in this post-cold war scenario. India had to restructure its policy in this challenging situation. It had to rebuild its relations with newly independent republics especially with Russian Federation, the most powerful and sole representative of erstwhile Soviet Union. The latter is an indispensable and time-tested friend. Despite the sticky start, both India and Russia recognized the importance of each other and improved after that. Historical legacies, common perception on the issues of International politics and economic binding compelled both India and Russia for a better relationship in the new century. Both the countries have the natural compulsions in the contemporary world.