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## Rethinking Indira Gandhi's Foreign Policy: Peace and Pragmatism

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### Abstract

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has not only served the Indian nation, but also served the whole South Asian region. This paper is primarily focusing on Indira Gandhi's foreign policy with special emphasis on the notion of peace. Indira Gandhi has carried out the legacy of Jawaharlal Nehru at the time of her premiership. This paper is trying to draw out the successful implementations of peace policies carried out by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in her regime. The issues like- Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971, Liberation Movement in Bangladesh, NPT and the nuclear explosion in India and the significance of the merger of Sikkim have been categorically analysed. Actually, this paper is highly related to the idea of 'peace' implemented through foreign policy.

**Key words:** *Bangladesh, foreign policy, liberation movement, NPT, peace, South Asia.*

### 1. Introduction

As a political leader of South Asia, Indira Gandhi was highly successful in the context of external affairs or Foreign Policy. After the independence of India, Indira Gandhi who was the first Prime Minister to strongly condemned any kind of external terrorism. Indira Gandhi had never been denied the great legacy of Jawaharlal Nehru. Indira Gandhi was not only a leader of Indian nation, but she was also a leader of South Asia in a larger context. In this paper we are going to argue that how Indira Gandhi's thoughts and actions has shaped the Indian foreign policy. Indira Gandhi has not only united India from the external evils, but also she has united India to contribute in world peace. The Indian Foreign Policy under the premiership of Indira Gandhi was very much successful to maintain peace in external affairs. Hence, she was the Prime Minister of peace, and she was very much pragmatic towards the peaceful application of Indian foreign policy. The main questions have been raised in this paper are- what was the basic significance of Indira Gandhi era? How does Indira Gandhi mix up peace and pragmatism in her foreign policy, with special emphasis on Bangladesh question? In introductory part we will focus on her early life, in next part we will focus on the related questions. Many scholars have argued that- "The kind of personality that Indira Gandhi had developed, however, made it more or less inevitable that such socialist rhetoric as she had acquired in her youth would be used by her mainly as an instrument for her own political survival and the consolidation of her own political power" (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970, p. 255).

However, this paper is trying to draw out basically Indira Gandhi's leadership and contributions in external affairs; where it can be argued that she has successfully applied the idea of 'peace' in Indian foreign policy and strengthened the nation by its pragmatic use.

## **2. Review of Literature**

There are not many published works that deal with the theme. Actually, the key area of this research is peace and foreign policy, but one can't deny the greater role of India as a civilization. Of these, one of the important titles is 'Indian Wisdom and International Peace' by Dr. R. N. Vyas (Delhi, Gian Publishing House, 1987). It is worth reviewing the arguments of this work in some detail. The idea of world peace has been developed and nurtured by India for a long time, though the India's position of world peace has not yet been adequately explored. Above all, some devoted authors have tried to study the position of India in the establishment of world peace. This present work by R. N. Vyas has been rooted in broad theoretical arguments regarding the place of India. The entire book has been divided into three basic themes; the first concerns the basis of peace, while the second argument is based on the thoughts of Indian thinkers (from Sri Krishna to Morarji Desai). The third theme consists of various views from the western world on world peace. The western thought of world peace has been pioneered by their thinkers like Voltaire, Kant and Count Leo Tolstoy. Hence, this volume has tried to bring together the Indian and western tradition of peace respectively.

'Peace, Friendship and Cooperation' by Brojendra Nath Banerjee (B. P. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1987) is another book that looks broadly on the gamut of factors regarding world peace and India's record. The author has tried to present a complete scenario of the significant events which are directly interconnected with the approach of India towards world peace. The very notion "peace" has been explained in terms of development, friendship, and cooperation. The author has also tried to explore the significance of peace in national development, and the interconnection between friendship and development has been categorically discussed in here. The relationship between India and Russia is also an important part of this present volume. Chapter 1 of the book deals with the issues of diplomatic relationship between India and Russia regarding support to non-alignment, the arms race and assistance in the military and strategic affairs. Poverty alleviation was the primary object of India's strategy for development. The author has illustrated that the between 1980 and 1983, 69 countries negotiated "high conditionality" agreement with the World Bank of the International Monetary Fund, of which 67 were LDCS or less developing countries. Hence, this volume presents a detailed account of historical events of India's relationship between various nations, mainly with the USSR.

'Mother India A Political Biography of Indira Gandhi' (Penguin Books, Haryana, 2009) is another significant work on Indira Gandhi. The book deals with the political career of Indira Gandhi. The entire book has been divided into five parts. First part is dealing with the assassination of Indira Gandhi and her legacy in India. Part-II is dealing with the family life of Indira Gandhi. Part-III is dealing with the rising of power and her political career. And very significantly, part-IV is dealing with her neighbourhood policy, friendship, cooperation and her approach towards peace. In this part, the foreign policy of Indira Gandhi has been widely discussed. In part-V, her influence towards the world has been pointed out; similarly there is a fine sketch of India after Indira. Hence, this book has highly contributed to study and understand the entire life and works of Indira Gandhi.

After making a literature survey, the author opines that most of the book available on the subject focuses on the contribution of India in world peace and stability. The present article makes a very humble attempt to assess the nature and scope of Indira Gandhi's foreign policy and the pragmatism of peace.

### **3. Research Questions**

The research questions are-

1. What is the significance of Indira Gandhi era in the context of peace in Indian foreign policy?
2. What was the basic contribution of India in the context of liberation movement in Bangladesh?
3. What was the role of Indira Gandhi in the nuclear explosion in India?

### **4. Research Methodology**

The proposed research is primarily based on 'textual analysis', which is a useful technique of analysis in social science research. Texts have always been a major source of information and evidence for not only Political Science researchers but also for other social science researchers. This research proposes to use both "discourse" and "content" analysis. Attempt shall be made to find meaning and coherence of key texts, and how these fit together in terms of content, functions, and effect. Hence, discourse analysis will be the appropriate method for this research problem. The study plans also to use standard qualitative content analysis of documents to validate arguments concerning the significance of peace as a theme in Indian foreign policy. The work will use mostly primary and secondary materials available in the public domain. As primary documents are very few, so it will also make use of secondary sources including speeches, interviews, diaries and memories.

### **5. Contextualizing Peace and Pragmatism in Indira Gandhi's Foreign Policy**

First of all it is important to identify and analyse the meaning and scope of 'peace' and 'pragmatism'. The idea of peace has multiple meanings; peace means not to hurt, not to harm, not to lesion or bruise. On the other hand, pragmatism means a domain of application or use. Pragmatism actually denotes to the use or application of any ideas and actions. Now, as far as foreign policy is concern, the author is trying to make a linkage between peace and pragmatism largely in post-Nehru (mainly Indira Gandhi era) Indian foreign policy. Here, peace is basically a dominant ideology of principle. It is noteworthy to say that, Indira Gandhi was efficiently carrying Nehruvian idea if world peace and stability and due to that reason she has nurtured the Ministry of External Affairs as well as its officials. She has also tried to use peace pragmatically by making Indo-Soviet treaty of friendship; through this treaty she has managed to challenged Pakistan and on the other hand she make India globally relevant. So, treaty of friendship has acted as an initiative of peace and cooperation. Another significant example of peace and pragmatism is- the liberation movement in Bangladesh and the cooperation of India. Although, many scholars have argued that, Nehru would have preferred a diplomatic solution in Bangladesh rather the use of military forces (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970). However, Indira Gandhi not only prevents the repressive and non-democratic forces in Bangladesh (then it was East Pakistan) successfully, but she was also successful to save the entire South East Asian region from 'violence and unfreedom'. The liberation of Bangladesh was the best example of the use of peace in a pragmatic manner. Hence, although Indira Gandhi has been criticised vastly for the misuse of 'power' but it can't be denied that she was a pioneer of peace and will be remembered for her pragmatic attitude. It is noteworthy to say that, she was a real follower of Jawaharlal Nehru.

## **6. The Significance of Indira Gandhi Era**

Indira Gandhi was very much close to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. After being the Prime Minister of independent India, Indira Gandhi has tried to go beyond the Nehruvian idealism. She has deeply experienced the defeat of India in the 1962 war. So, Indira Gandhi was very much aware of the Nehruvian idealism. She has never been ignored the Nehru's philosophical appeal to India, the notion of non-alignment and idealistic foreign policy. Nonetheless, all of these factors are deeply rooted in the thought and actions of Indira Gandhi's foreign policy. All of these issues have been substantiated in the entire discussions of this paper. The personality of Indira Gandhi has been shaped in her young age. The idea of socialism had influenced her very much. Indira Gandhi tried to use these socialist ideas for her own political survival and the "consolidation of her own Political power". During the split of Congress in 1969, Indira Gandhi managed to maintain stability both within and beyond Congress. Indira Gandhi and her foreign Policy were pro-soviet and anti-American in the first phase of her premiership. She actually combined the socialist principles and socialist values with her foreign policy. During her premiership, Indira Gandhi made a combination of reality and the practice of foreign affairs. She had a high personal regard for foreign affairs and foreign relations. She had spent her young age in Europe, which means she had experienced the rise of Fascism in Italy and Germany, the Civil War in Spain, the failure of the League of Nations, the Soviet German Non-Aggression Pact and the beginning of the Second World War (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970).

So, Indira Gandhi experienced a lot in the contemporary world. Actually, during her school days in Switzerland, Nehru's letters had given her a broad understanding regarding the main events of world history. Her connections with the important political personalities and the radical Indian students in England also made her aware her of contemporary affairs of the world (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970). Now, many scholars have argued that, democracy actually strengthens civil society and vice versa (Kothari, 2019). So, it is noteworthy to say that, Indira Gandhi was highly aware of that fact.

Indira Gandhi returned to India in 1941. She travelled the world with Nehru and met leading statesmen and the heads of the states and governments. She visited many nations after Nehru became the Prime Minister. Her international visits were most frequent in the decades of the fifties and sixties. In 1953, she visited Soviet Union where she met with the Soviet statesmen and leaders. Indira Gandhi was very much interested in foreign and international affairs with special reference to the nations of Asia and Africa. So, she had already accumulated a strong experience of international negotiations much before her premiership (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970).

## **7. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 and Its Significance**

The Indo-Soviet treaty had a basic background. India's dependency over the Soviet Union was based on their friendship and cooperation. After the Sino-Indian Conflict of 1962, the Sino-Pakistan axis and Cooperation had started to develop. The conflict between the US and China in the late sixties and early seventies extended the rivalry and threatened the security of India. The liberation movement started in early 1971, and the Pakistani army was incapable of controlling the situation. In March 1971, the Pakistani army was defeated in the Liberation War. The resistance movement had started to enter India which imposed an unbearable strain on the Indian economy. Due to the military actions in East Pakistan, the external security of India, especially West Bengal, was threatened to a large degree. On the other hand, USA and Pakistan were strong allies. USA had assisted West Pakistan with military aid. But at the last moment, East Pakistan had been rescued from the aggression of West Pakistan. In this situation, India

had assisted the Liberation Army in East Pakistan. The US government made it clear to the Indian government that if China attacked both India and Bangladesh, the US government would not oppose this kind of attack. However, this did not happen, and Bangladesh (East Pakistan) achieved freedom from the army rule of West Pakistan. The role of India was quite progressive and humanitarian in this context.

In the context of India's external threat, Indira Gandhi tried to change the Indian diplomatic strategy. In the year of 1969, Soviet Union had declared a bilateral treaty with a particular Soviet commitment to India's security. Although Indira Gandhi had declined the proposal, due to the adverse public reaction in India, and also due to the possibility of damaging India's long-term relations with countries like the US and China, Indira Gandhi secretly sent her confidante D.P. Dhar to negotiate the treaty. The final draft of the treaty was modified with the insistence of Indira Gandhi.

Actually, Indira Gandhi had not only tried to protect India's military policy but also strongly preserve India's policy of nonalignment. This treaty greatly affected the Indo-China relations and Indo-US relations. The Political Affairs Committee of the Cabinet was not aware of the treaty, until Indira Gandhi informed them of the day it was signed. Hence, the Indo-Soviet treaty was finalised on 9th August, 1971. This treaty was completely a matter of surprise to the senior staff and ambassadors of the Indian embassy. Ambassadors like Jha and M. Rasgotra did not attempt to hide the news, but they were completely surprised with this treaty. Indira Gandhi made a public announcement of the signing of the treaty, and Indians were enthusiastic regarding the treaty. The Indo-Soviet Treaty did not violate India's policy of nonalignment. It did not hamper India's long-term interest of peace. The treaty was historically and strategically necessary for both India and Soviet Union. In the context of great international threats and provocations, Nehru had never signed any treaty like the Indo-Soviet treaty. But then, Nehru had dealt with security problems according to the situation. On the other hand, Indira Gandhi, interested as she was in the international treaties and pacts, signed the treaty without any kind of hesitation. Nevertheless, Indira Gandhi also emphasised India's pivotal role in international peace and stability.

## **8. Military Intervention and the Liberation Movement in Bangladesh**

The Indian military intervention in Bangladesh clearly indicates the strong personality of Indira Gandhi. In the middle of 1971, the military intervention in Bangladesh had been started. Due to economic and strategic necessity, India gave assistance with combat force to the Bangladeshi inhabitants who were victims of the situation. After mid-1971, the Border Security Force (BSF) and RAW began to be seriously involved in the Bangladesh war. The army generals were preparing for any kind of military action in Bangladesh. The military had prepared a strategy of military action, to move forward only in the winter season when the Himalayan passes would remain snowbound. That could prevent China from extending any kind of military assistance to West Pakistan. This strategy was effective and India perfectly prohibited the military actions of West Pakistan in Bangladesh. A plan of quick military action was prepared. Indira Gandhi tried to influence the global diplomatic order and also to win sympathy for India's position. In September, Indira Gandhi visited the Soviet Union and met leaders such as Kosygin.

In October and November, she visited Belgium, Austria, UK, France, West Germany and the United States. Except the US, her visits to the nations were quite successful. Actually, she was able to draw attention and sympathy for India's position. Indira Gandhi also sent some of Cabinet ministers to other parts of the world like West Asia, Africa and Southeast Asia. So, Indira Gandhi tried to not only win on military grounds but also win strategically in the war of Bangladesh.

Pakistan made pre-planned air-strike on 3rd December, strategically with a view to internationalize the Bangladesh crisis and divert the Indian army to the western front. The Indian army rapidly entered several fronts with a planned military action in Bangladesh. In this situation, the Soviet Union vetoed the American resolution in the Security Council and condemned the Indian position and demanded the withdrawal of Indian armed forces from Bangladesh. A US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Enterprise moved into the Bay of Bengal from the South Pacific and that had obviously threatened Indian security (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970, p.260).

Indira Gandhi ignored the threat and advised the army chiefs to try for quick victory in several fronts. D.P. Dhar was immediately sent to Moscow, and he was looking for full Soviet support against both the Chinese military attack and intervention in the Sinkiang. The Soviet navy was also ordered to follow the Enterprise. In this context, when USA was vetoed by the Soviet Union in the Security Council, it successfully made a resolution in the General Assembly calling for immediate withdrawal of troops, because the war was nearly over. In this situation, Soviet Deputy Premier Kuznetsov came to Delhi on 12th December and remained there till the end of the war. The West Pakistani forces in Bangladesh, over 90,000 armies, surrendered on 16th December. Indira Gandhi prevented the internationalization of the Bangladesh issue. Gandhi immediately announced a unified cease-fire on the western front; thus, a larger section of Indian people was greatly disappointed (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970).

The defeat of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh would not have been possible but for the Indian military intervention. The Indian army was successful in the protection of Bangladesh. The national security was also protected by the Indian Army not only in Bangladesh but also in the Indian nation itself. Thus, the Indian National Security has been secured and improved by the Indian Army. Jawaharlal Nehru was different from Indira Gandhi. With the rivalry with Pakistan, Nehru had never tried to move militarily, but Gandhi tried to establish peace in Bangladesh with the intervention of the Indian Armed Forces (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970).

Actually, the Nehruvian foreign policy was quite opposite to the foreign policy of Indira Gandhi. In the case of military interventions in Bangladesh, Nehru would have preferred a diplomatic solution to the Bangladesh crisis. Furthermore, Nehru would have never agreed for a massive involvement of the RAW in the resistance movement in Bangladesh. But Indira Gandhi highly opted for military-based resistance movement in the Bangladesh.

The military intervention in Bangladesh was a sudden decision taken by Indira Gandhi. Many scholars argued that the decision of Indira Gandhi to make military invention in Bangladesh was a “gambler’s choice”. In case of the military intervention in Bangladesh, there was a large element of luck in the successful implementation of the military operations.

The results of Bangladesh war would have been different, and it would have damaged the national interest of India. But the luck factor is very much significant in this respect. Many authors have argued that it (Bangladesh war) was Gandhi’s gamble that had been successful (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970). In case of domestic politics, though, Gandhi was not successful and she failed in many cases. However, the role of civil society was very much prominent in the liberation movement of Bangladesh; in the Asian context, Prof. R. R. Sharme tried to highlight a very uneasy democratic-civil society linkage (Kothari, 2019). Nonetheless, both Indian and Bangladeshi civil society has highly contributed for the liberation of Bangladesh at its best.

## 9. The NPT and the Nuclear Explosion in India

India's search for nuclear power is a significant issue in the field of the analysis of foreign policy of the country. After independence, India was not only trying to strengthen economically, but also trying to achieve the nuclear power. After the first decade of Indian Independence, India had declared many programs for the development and utilisation of nuclear power which would be used for purely peaceful economic purpose (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970, p. 261). Prime Ministers like Jawaharlal Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri had categorically announced that India will never manufacture any kind of nuclear weapons. Nehru's vision was a peaceful world order and arms free world. Although, Indira Gandhi was committed to the disarmament program, in reality, her attitude became "ambivalent". Indira Gandhi wanted to construct a strong and stable India in terms of nuclear weapons. She has emphasised the prestige value, but not the deterrent value of a successful nuclear explosion. Thus, Indira Gandhi became the first Prime Minister under whose regime India achieved the status of nation with nuclear stability (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970).

Indira Gandhi was extremely strict in her personality and she never accepted any conditions from anybody against her strong will. Actually after the first nuclear explosion in Pokhran, USA and Soviet Union jointly finalised the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968, and at that particular time, both USA and Soviet Union tried to pressurise India into signing the treaty. Indira Gandhi very prominently resisted this pressure from the Western countries. The treaty was somewhat discriminatory in character. For this reason, Indira Gandhi strongly opposed the treaty and the entire country heartily supported Indira Gandhi. Actually, the Western countries were suspecting that India will promote military nuclear program for her own purpose. India explored her first nuclear device in May 1974- many people explained it as a fulfilment of their own apprehension.

However, Mrs. Gandhi and her government tried to characterise and publicise the nuclear program as a test of peaceful nuclear programming. The entire purpose of India's nuclear test was to develop the nuclear energy and not to use it as a military weapon. But many foreign governments had pointed out that the difference between nuclear device and a nuclear weapon was semantic rather than technical. Actually, the necessity and advantage of a nuclear explosion for any country is highly controversial (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970).

The possible economic uses of the nuclear explosion in India were the most significant factor. India was trying to become a dominant power in the entire South Asia region and the rivalry with Pakistan was also very much significant. In the global context, the prestige of the nuclear capability is always a matter of pride. After the nuclear explosion, India achieved the status of nuclear-powered nation. Soon after the Indian explosion, it was declared by Kissinger and the US administration that the US respected India as a major power in South Asia. USA also tried to highlight the "more natural and equal relationship" which could be constituted between USA and India. It is also noteworthy that after the Bangladesh war, factionalism had evolved within the Congress. And furthermore, there were deteriorations in the economic matters of the country.

The conditions of economic productions were not good at all. The conditions of heavy industry were not in position. The image and the popularity of Indira Gandhi had been hampered massively. In this internal situation of India, the nuclear explosion worked as a "great image-booster and image-maker for not only Indira Gandhi but also for the Indian National Congress. So, the status of nuclear-powered nation constituted a new image for India, internally and externally. Actually, Jawaharlal Nehru had always

opposed the nuclear explosion anywhere in the world. He had always pleaded for a nuclear-free world. On the other hand, Lal Bahadur Shastri had always tried to invite the superpowers “to hold a protective nuclear umbrella over India” (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970, p. 263). Above all, the role of Indira Gandhi in the context of the achievement of the nuclear power was far different from the earlier Prime Ministers. The nuclear program of India was independent of any kind of international pressure. And Indira Gandhi never tried to urge the world to use nuclear power in its peaceful means. Indira Gandhi tried to become pragmatic in this context. A renowned foreign scholar analysed Indira Gandhi’s opinion and observed that: “...the Gandhism which prevails in India today is not that of the Mahatma, but rather that of Indira Gandhi, who has been Minister for Atomic Energy as well as Prime Minister ever since 1966. The political style of Gandhi may be said to combine the modernising ideas of her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, but without his Hamlet-like hesitancy. Her decisiveness in practice, her skill in crisis management, is more reminiscent of Sardar Patel who was tough, realistic, not given to gratuitous explanations and justifications, though without his touch of Hindu chauvinism” (Lyon, 1974). So, the personality of Indira Gandhi influenced many people, and not only that, Indira Gandhi tried to recombine her pragmatic character with the foreign policy of Indian nation. Indira Gandhi tried to strengthen the Indian Foreign Policy, Indian Nuclear Policy and Indian Defence Policy. Although there was international pressure on the Indian Nuclear Program, with the leadership of Indira Gandhi, a strong and stable nuclear program was started. Therefore, Indira Gandhi was completely successful in the manifestation of a strong and stable nuclear policy for India. The other states of Asia and Africa were highly influenced by the achievement of India. The nuclear policy had subsequently strengthened the defence policy and the foreign policy of modern India (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970).

## **10. The Significance of the Merger of Sikkim in India**

The merger of Sikkim was the most significant incident during the regime of Indira Gandhi. Under the treaty of 1950, the Indian National Army was permanently stationed in the Sikkim. The significance of Sikkim was accepted in the all over India. The geo-political significance of Sikkim was influenced Indira Gandhi to a large extent. The internal development plans of Sikkim were a part of India’s Five Year Plans. The communication system and other aspects of its internal administration were looked upon by the government of India. The other aspects like the external affairs of Sikkim were wholly controlled and maintained by the Government of India. The inclusion of Sikkim in India can be treated as an initiative of peace and it must be considered as an important success of Indira Gandhi’s foreign policy. From the very beginning Sikkim was an independent country, but the situation permits it to become a part of Indian nation. Actually, in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the British Empire sought to establish trade routes with Tibet, leading Sikkim to fall under British suzerainty until independence in 1947. Initially, Sikkim remains an independent country, until it merged with India in 1975 after a significant referendum. Sikkim was ruled by Buddhist priest-kings known as Chogyal. It became a princely state of British India in 1890. Following Indian independence, Sikkim continued its protectorate status with India after 1947, and the republic of India after 1950. In 1973, anti-royal riots took place in Sikkim. In 1975, the Indian Army took over the city of Gangtok. It is noteworthy to say that, by Indira Gandhi’s initiative a referendum was held that led to the abolition of the monarchy, and Sikkim joined India as its 22<sup>nd</sup> state. Actually, Indira Gandhi’s foreign policy was very much inclined to the idea of peace, and Indira Gandhi was very much aware of the geo-political position of Sikkim. She has highly emphasised upon the democratic transformation of Sikkim and due to that fact, she assist Sikkim from outside to organize a referendum. Hence, the inclusion of Sikkim in Indian republic was a success of Indira Gandhi’s foreign policy and it must be treated as an initiative of peace and democracy. Actually, India Gandhi saved Sikkim from the oligarchy in one hand

and unfreedom from other hand. So, it was an achievement of entire Indian nation (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970).

Although there were differences between the status of Sikkim and other Indian states, there were huge similarities too. Nonetheless, Sikkim was legally a semi-sovereign state and had a special treaty relationship with the Indian state. India never tried to impose any kind of domination over the sovereign state of Sikkim. There was a friendly relationship with the state of Sikkim, and since 1950, India had tried to maintain sustainable and peaceful relationship with the state of Sikkim (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970).

However, after the fifth general election of the Sikkim Council in 1973, there was a political crisis in Sikkim. Many political parties demanded political reforms in Sikkim. The Sikkim Janata Congress demanded radical reforms and decentralisation of power in Sikkim. The radical political reforms were demanded and raised by other political parties. But the demand of political reforms was resisted by the Chhogyal, and after this situation the Sikkimese administration collapsed. Nonetheless, with the request of the Chhogyal, the Indian Army took over the entire responsibility of maintenance of law and order in Sikkim. Two days later, the entire administrative power was taken over by the Indian political officer at the insistence of the Chhogyal. India was trying to make a comprehensive solution of the Sikkim problem. In the state of Sikkim, there was a tripartite agreement among the Chhogyal, the major three political parties of Sikkim, and the Government of India. The agreement allowed the democratic elections in the Assembly of Sikkim to fulfil the universal adult franchise in the state. The Chhogyal had held the official post as a purely constitutional head, but Chhogyal did not possess any substantive powers. Hence, Chhogyal was unsuccessful in the maintenance of a constitutional head in the state of Sikkim (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970).

There was a merger of Sikkim Janata Congress and the Sikkim National Congress in Sikkim. But Sikkim Congress did not join in the merger of the two political parties. Without any kind of alliance, Sikkim Congress won an overwhelming victory in the election. This election has held in April 1974, and the entire election was supervised by the representatives of the Election Commission of India. The new Assembly passed new resolutions and transferred most of the powers to the Chhogyal itself and the Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers possessed many substantive powers. With the emergence of a new legislative assembly, the Chhogyal became a mere constitutional head. But the new legislation was obstructed and violated by the Chhogyal itself, and the Chhogyal also violated the tripartite agreement of 1973. However, the new government of Sikkim requested the Government of India to make the state of Sikkim an “Associate State” of India. In this particular stage, the Chhogyal reluctantly signed a bill, which made it a constitutional monarch. After this incident, the Constitution of India was amended, in September 1974. The Indian Constitution transformed the state of Sikkim as an “Associate State” and made provisions for its representation in the Indian parliament. After this situation, Chhogyal cleverly attempted to internationalise the domestic problems of Sikkim by means of direct interactions with the foreign nations (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970).

Now, the Assembly of Sikkim passed a new resolution and requested the Government of India to make Sikkim a regular State and a constituent State of India. This type of resolution was also endorsed by the people of Sikkim through a new referendum (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970, p.264). Thus, the institutional power and position of the Chhogyal was abolished simultaneously and, on 16 May 1975, Sikkim was transformed into an Indian State.

The merger of Sikkim in India had undoubtedly improved the national security of India. With the merger of Sikkim, the position and status of Indira Gandhi improved. In fact, the merger of Sikkim added a new feather in Indira Gandhi's cap. The entire process of the constitutional change of Sikkim had taken place under the control of Indian administration. Even the elections and the referendum had been organised by Indian officials. It created doubts in the mind of the people regarding the extension of "popular support" for the merger of Sikkim in India. The Sikkimese Assembly consisted of only 32 legislative seats and the voting on these seats was not difficult to manipulate. The political corruption was very strong at the time.

And it was widely believed that at the time of Sikkim's merger, the Indian RAW was involved in the political operation in Sikkim (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970). It was also believed that a large amount of money had been spent at the time of the merger of Sikkim. The Janata Prime Minister Morarji Desai expressed that, after the search of the related files of the merger of Sikkim, he supported the fundamental principle of the merger, but he was strongly opposed to the procedures and methods adopted by the Government of India. Many scholars of Indian Foreign Policy have argued that the methods and principles of Indira Gandhi as a Prime Minister would have been approved by neither Pandit Nehru nor Shastri. So, the role and function of Indira Gandhi were debatable and sometimes became controversial.

So, Indira Gandhi tried to strengthen the foreign policy of India with the help of the Indian administrative wing. The Indira Gandhi era will be remembered for the pragmatic application of peace in India. In this era, India achieved many new statuses internationally. The Indira Gandhi era brought many new glories for India. Especially through the Indian Foreign Policy, Indira Gandhi tried to keep international peace and order. So, Indira Gandhi and her foreign policy contributed in the field of world peace, harmony and stability.

## **11. Conclusion**

It is necessary to delineate the position of Indira Gandhi in the maintenance of world peace. The personality and political stance of Indira Gandhi had astonished the administrators of foreign nations. She managed to draw the attention of foreign nations regarding world peace. Like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi tried to make close ties with the newly independent nations of Asia and Africa. In South Asia, many nation states had appreciated Indira Gandhi for her leadership style and her positivistic approach towards world peace. In the tenure of Indira Gandhi, her status was enshrined in the phrase "Indira is India." Nevertheless, Indira Gandhi was a successful administrator, and she was successful in constituting a foreign policy of peace through the means of progressive foreign relations. Hence, under her Premiership, India has achieved the status of a peace-loving nation in the world. The questions which were raised in the introductory part have been properly illustrated in the segments of Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971, the military intervention and the liberation movement in Bangladesh, the NPT and the nuclear explosion in India and the significance of the merger of Sikkim in India. The pragmatism of Indira Gandhi era can be identified from the overall discussions of the paper. As far as the research findings are concern, Indira Gandhi era will be remembered for its success in foreign policy mainly. Indira Gandhi was not idealist like Nehru; she was a realist prime minister and her foreign policy was based on realism. Although she has used armed force and military power but nevertheless, she was a propagator of peace. Thus, Indira Gandhi becomes an ideal figure within the nation and outside the nation. Secondly, the entire world must remember her for her pragmatic contributions in the liberation movement in Bangladesh. She, actually prevent Pakistan and other foreign interventions in Bangladesh and doing so she actually make a pragmatic example of peace. Here, pragmatism is equivalent as realism. Thirdly, Indira Gandhi was highly successful to make India stable in terms of nuclear power. There was arms race with the Pakistan

but she has never stopped before any provocation and made India stable in terms of nuclear power in May 1974. Hence, Indira Gandhi was a prime minister of pragmatic intellect and humanist attitude.

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