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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EVALUATION ON INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT:

Russia has been a reliable and enduring partner for India. The advancement of India-Russia relations has been a fundamental component of India's foreign policy. Following the signing of the declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership in October 2000 during President Putin's visit, India-Russia relations have evolved significantly, marked by increased cooperation across various domains, including politics, security, defense, trade and economy, science and technology, culture, and interpersonal connections. The Russian President upgraded the strategic cooperation to a special and privileged strategic partnership during his visit to India in December 2010. In this research paper, evaluation on India-Russia relations with special reference to current perspectives has been discussed.

KEYWORDS: India, Russia, Relations.

INTRODUCTION:

Within the Strategic Partnership, multiple institutionalized conversation channels function at both political and official tiers to provide consistent interaction and monitoring of cooperative initiatives. The India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission (IRIGC) comprises two divisions: the Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological, and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), co-chaired by India's External Affairs Minister and Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov; and the Military & Military-Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC), led by the Defense Ministers of both nations. The Foreign and Defense Ministers of both nations introduced the inaugural 2+2 Dialogue in December 2021, coinciding with the summit-level discussions between the Prime Minister and President Putin.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE (CURRENT PERSPECTIVES):

Ganguly, S. (2024). Moscow and New Delhi have exhibited contrasting strategies in the development of their strategic alliance. While Russia has hastily sought to revive its historical alliance with India, the latter has responded with considerable circumspection. New Delhi has exhibited a sophisticated strategy in managing the Russia-Ukraine situation, maintaining amicable relations with both Moscow and the West. India's unprecedented imports of Russian crude and other commodities, occasionally in contravention of Western sanctions, have significantly enhanced bilateral trade. We should not misconstrue this "oil connection" as a significant advancement in their alliance, even though it may benefit both the Indian and Russian economies. Data training concluded in October 2023. [1]

Borah, R. (2024). Defense was a significant aspect of the Indo-USSR relationship, with the majority of India's armament acquisitions originating from the Soviet Union. India liked buying defense equipment from the USSR for four main reasons: the USSR had lower prices than Western countries; Soviet weapons were developed in small steps, with many new models using parts from older models, which made it easier to make changes to the production line without spending a lot of money; the Soviet Union was willing to make weapons for India, starting with the MiG-21 agreement in 1962 and continuing with the MiG-27 ground attack fighters in 1983 and the T-72

tanks in 1980; and finally, the Soviets were willing to trade, allowing the export of goods like industrial consumer goods. [2]

Unnikrishnan, N. & Dutta, A. (2023). Since their formal inception in April 1947, India-Russia relations have undergone several phases. Notwithstanding numerous forecasts of its deterioration after the Cold War, the strategic alliance between India and Russia has endured and, in certain domains, has intensified. This brief contends that there exists a credible geopolitical rationale for both nations to continue fortifying their relations. It provides a historical overview of the cooperation, examines its ongoing significance for both nations, and contemplates the influence of contemporary geopolitical trends on this relationship. [3]

Vavachan, D. (2023). Both nations view the relations between India and the Soviet Union as a significant chapter in their respective histories. The convergence of two culturally distinct nations, each adhering to divergent political systems and ideologies, to establish a strategic and mutually advantageous cooperation was atypical. We observed the engagement between India and the Soviet Union across all dimensions of political, economic, and military relations. The Chinese incursions in 1962 and several other historical situations where India needed assistance showcased their robust links. The Indian side reciprocated the help that the Soviet Union extended during critical periods. This paper analyzes the robust and amicable relationship between India and the Soviet Union across various historical contexts, addressing its significance for both nations and its relevance in the contemporary global political landscape, which currently showcases strong India-Russia relations. [4]

Mehta, S. & Misra, A.N. (2023). India and Russia are among the closest strategic, economic, military, and diplomatic partners globally. During the Cold War era, the Soviet Union (USSR) unwaveringly provided assistance to India, despite India's non-aligned status. In the past two decades, India and Russia have pursued autonomous foreign policies, resulting in a convergence of interests between the two nations. The West, especially the United States and its allies, pose a threat to Russia, but India's relations with the West are currently at an optimal level. The 2008 Civil Nuclear Deal of India and its membership in the QUAD security discussion, alongside Japan, Australia, and the US, have elicited apprehensions in the Kremlin. Russia's strong relations with China and their leadership roles in venues such as the UN Security Council and the SCO have

established enduring mutual confidence. Conversely, India has seen Chinese aggression in border regions such as Galwan and Doklam. The Ukraine situation serves as a temporal challenge for both nations. This study aims to analyze the complexities of India-Russia relations and the efforts of both nations to enhance convergence in their partnership, notwithstanding their foreign policy commitments and shared international objectives. The paper will examine the diverse global platforms shared by India and Russia and their significance in sustaining the multipolarity of the contemporary global order. [5]

Akhood, I.A. (2023). Russia has been a reliable and enduring partner for India. The advancement of India-Russia relations has been a fundamental component of India's foreign policy. Since 1947, India and Russia have maintained strong links, with Russia assisting India in achieving economic self-sufficiency through investments in heavy machine-building, mining, energy production, and steel manufacturing. Subsequently, India and the Soviet Union executed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in August 1971, which embodied the common objectives of both nations and served as a framework for enhancing regional and global peace and security. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, India and Russia established a new Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in January 1993, along with a bilateral Military-Technical Cooperation pact in 1994. The Indian government's response to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has elicited a mixed reaction, prompting a critical introspection among Indian lawmakers: Is Indian foreign policy still dependent on major superpowers, or are we progressing towards Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India)? Following its abstention in the UN Security Council, New Delhi once again refrained from voting in the United Nations General Assembly on a resolution denouncing Russia's aggression against Ukraine and urging Moscow to "immediately, completely, and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from Ukraine's territory within its internationally recognized borders." In the ongoing crisis, India has endeavored to uphold a non-aligned stance, refraining from assigning blame or specifying parties involved. This has proven to be a challenging task given the current circumstances. It has accomplished this by reaffirming essential principles established in the UN Charter and international law while also urging a cessation of violence and a return to dialogue as "the sole response to resolving disagreements and conflicts, no matter how formidable that may seem at present." [6]

Sajjanhar, A. (2021). India-Russia relations, both in the modern context and historically, have remained robust since the era of the Soviet Union. While there may be slight variations in their dynamism and intensity, the relationships have generally been robust and crucial for both nations. This link, despite its significance, fails to garner substantial attention from both the academic community and the general public. Prime Minister Modi's inaugural foreign tour occurred at Fortaleza in 2014, following his assumption of office in July 2014. If one were to walk down a street and ask a child what the strongest relationship is for India, they would undoubtedly state that it is with Russia. Although individuals and academia acknowledge its significance, this relationship does not receive adequate attention. This study examines the historical development of relations between India and the Soviet Union, and subsequently Russia, with an emphasis on the present condition of these connections. We are currently at a crucial juncture in the evolution of bilateral relations, having recently convened on 10th November 2021 for a meeting of national security advisers to deliberate on Afghanistan, which included participation from the Russian NSA. Furthermore, we eagerly await President Vladimir Putin's expected visit in December. We anticipate that India and Russia will hold their inaugural 2+2 dialogue, during which India's Defense Minister, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, and External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, will travel to Russia to engage with their counterparts, marking the start of this diplomatic format between India and the Russian Federation. We are at a critical juncture in our bilateral relations. [7]

METHODOLOGY:

The research was executed through secondary data and employed a qualitative research design. The language exhibited descriptive, deductive, and explanatory characteristics. Several sources, including books, book chapters, journal articles, websites, newspapers, and other pertinent materials linked to the topic area, provided the requisite data for this study. The data collection procedure involved the establishment of thematic arrangements. The data was triangulated from various sources for verification. The relationship between India and Russia encompasses multiple facets from contemporary viewpoints.

OBSERVATION, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The Annual Summit between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation represents the foremost formalized conversation mechanism in the strategic partnership between India and Russia. India and Russia have alternately conducted 21 annual summits to date. The most recent summit occurred on December 6, 2021, in New Delhi, resulting in the signing of 28 Memoranda of Understanding and agreements. The most recent in-person bilateral meeting between the two leaders was in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, during the SCO Summit in September 2022. Since that time, the leaders have sustained consistent communication via telephone discussions to assess advancements in bilateral cooperation and to share perspectives on regional and global matters of shared concern: 5 conversations in 2022, 2 in 2023, and 3 in 2024.

Both nations maintain communication at the ministerial level as well. The EAM and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov convene regularly for bilateral discussions and during significant events. In 2023, they convened seven times, most recently in Moscow on December 27, alongside the East Asia Summit and Foreign Ministers' meeting in Jakarta (September 6 and July 13), BRICS in South Africa (August 23 and June 01), SCO (May 04 in Goa), and G20 (March 01 in New Delhi) meetings. The EAM visited Russia in December 2023 and conducted discussions with President Putin, Foreign Minister Lavrov, and First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov, his co-chair of the IRIGC-TEC.

Likewise, the Defense Ministers, National Security Advisors, and other officials consistently convene with their counterparts. The NSA visited St. Petersburg on April 24, 2024, to participate in the 12th International Conference of High Officials Responsible for Security Matters, where he met with Nikolai Patrushev, the then Secretary of the Russian Security Council. Shri Faggan Singh Kulaste, the Minister of State for Steel and Rural Development, led the Indian delegation to the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) 2023, while Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, led the 2022 delegation. During the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) 2023, Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways & AYUSH, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, headed the Indian delegation.

The principal platform for expanding trade and economic collaboration is the IRIGC-TEC, which convened its 24th session in New Delhi on 18 April 2023. EAM convened with his Russian co-chair, Deputy PM Denis Manturov, on December 26 in Moscow to discuss issues pertaining to

bilateral cooperation in trade, economics, energy, defense, and connectivity. The IRIGC-M&MTC, co-chaired by the Defense Ministers of India and Russia, last convened in New Delhi on 6 December 2021 during the leaders' summit and the maiden 2+2 Dialogue. The Defense Ministers convened on the periphery of the SCO Defense Ministers Meeting in New Delhi on 28 April 2023.

India and Russia collaborate extensively across several global venues, including the UN, G20, BRICS, and SCO. Russia will assume the BRICS chairmanship in 2024. India's G20 and SCO Presidency in 2023 provided an opportunity for officials and ministers from both nations to convene during major events in India. In 2023, Russian involvement in SCO activities in India comprised: Foreign Minister Lavrov (4-5 May), former Secretary of the Russian Security Council Nikolai Patrushev (29 March), Minister of Emergency Situations Alexander Kurenkov (20 April), and former Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu (28 April). India, during its G20 Presidency, received Foreign Minister Lavrov from March 1-3 and September 9-10, as well as Ms. Valentina Matvienko, Head of the Federation Council, from October 12-15. Both nations possess a history of strong collaboration inside the United Nations. Russia has repeatedly endorsed India's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.

Both presidents have prioritized enhancing trade and economic connections, having previously set goals to increase bilateral investment to \$50 billion and bilateral trade to \$30 billion by 2025. According to the Department of Commerce, bilateral commerce in FY 2023–24 has attained a record high of \$65.70 billion, comprising a total bilateral goods trade of USD 65.70 billion, with India's exports at USD 4.26 billion and imports at USD 61.44 billion. India's principal exports consist of pharmaceuticals, organic chemicals, electrical machinery, mechanical appliances, and iron and steel, whereas Russia's primary imports encompass oil and petroleum products, fertilizers, mineral resources, precious stones and metals, and vegetable oils.

Bilateral trade in services has remained consistent over the past five years, with a trade balance favoring Russia. The total was \$1.021 billion for the year 2021. The bilateral investments between the two nations remain robust, surpassing the previous target of \$30 billion in 2018, leading to a revised objective of \$50 billion by 2025. Russia primarily concentrates its bilateral investments in

the oil and gas, petrochemicals, banking, railroads, and steel industries in India, while India primarily invests in the oil and gas and pharmaceuticals sectors in Russia.

India maintains extensive and enduring collaboration with Russia in the defense sector. The defense ministers of both nations oversee the IRIGC-M&MTC framework, which directs the collaboration. The 20th IRIGC-M&MTC meeting occurred in December 2021. India and Russia engage in bilateral and multilateral military exercises across all three branches of the armed forces. The bilateral exercise INDRA occurred most recently in 2021. They also engage in international exercises, such as Vostok 2022, conducted in September 2022 in Russia.

Bilateral projects encompass the provision of S-400 systems, licensed manufacturing of T-90 tanks and Su-30 MKI aircraft, delivery of MiG-29 and Kamov helicopters, the INS Vikramaditya (formerly Admiral Gorshkov), production of AK-203 rifles in India, and BrahMos missiles. The military technical cooperation between India and Russia has transitioned from a buyer-seller model to a framework that encompasses cooperative research and development, co-development, and collaborative manufacture of advanced defense technologies and systems.

The Inter-Parliamentary Commission, including the Lok Sabha and the Russian State Duma, has been instrumental in promoting parliamentary collaboration. It has convened on five occasions since its establishment (2000, 2003, 2015, 2017, 2018). The Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairperson of the State Duma jointly chair the Commission. The fifth India-Russia Inter-Parliamentary Commission convened in India on 9 December 2018. In Russia, both chambers of parliament, the State Duma (Lower House) and the Federation Council (Upper House), possess a “Group of Deputies for Asia,” which encompasses a subgroup of Deputies concentrating on India. Correspondingly, there exists an India-Russia Friendship Group within the Indian parliament. During the P20 Summit in October 2023, Valentina Matvienko, Chairperson of the Federation Council, headed the Russian delegation in New Delhi, where she conducted bilateral discussions with the Honorable Vice President of India and the Honorable Speaker of the Lok Sabha. From April 11 to 12, 2024, an Indian Parliamentary delegation attended the Meetings of Chairs of Committees on International Affairs of BRICS Parliaments at the Federation Council of the Russian Federation in Moscow.

Science and technology have been essential in the bilateral partnership between India and Russia, particularly in the initial years following India's independence. Currently, India and Russia collaborate in fundamental sciences, materials science, mathematics, and advanced fields such as India's manned spaceflight initiative (Gaganyaan), nanotechnology, and quantum computing. India's sole nuclear power facility in collaboration with another nation is the Kudankulam Nuclear Plant in Tamil Nadu. Signed during the 21st Annual Summit in New Delhi in December 2021, the newly established roadmap for Science, Technology, and Innovation directs the bilateral collaboration. The two nations anticipate enhancing innovation-related collaborations, with a focus on technology commercialization and comprehensive support for joint initiatives of economic and societal significance. In January 2023, the 12th session of the Russia-India Working Group on Science and Technology convened, featuring members from pertinent ministries, universities, and scientists from both nations.

Various universities enroll Indian students in a variety of courses across fields like engineering, economics, sciences, and other subjects. Medical students constitute the predominant cohort of Indian students pursuing education in Russia. Many Russian institutions offer Indology alongside Indian languages such as Hindi, Sanskrit, and Pali. The Prime Minister and President Putin have conceived an effort that involves collaboration between India's Atal Innovation Mission and the SIRIUS Center at the school level. They work on breakthroughs across various domains, including smart mobility, agri-tech, clean energy, space research, and healthcare. The Prime Minister and President Putin jointly attended the presentations of these students in Sochi, Russia (2018) and at IIT Delhi (2019).

India and Russia possess profound and historical cultural connections. The renowned Russian artist and philosopher Nicholas Roerich ultimately established his residence in Himachal Pradesh. Authors such as Leo Tolstoy and Alexander Pushkin significantly impacted Indian literature and intellectual discourse. The Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre (JNCC) in Moscow collaborates closely with prominent Russian institutions. Prominent Russian universities and institutions provide instruction in Indian languages. Indian cinema retains its popularity in Russia, with regular film screenings throughout. Yoga enjoys significant popularity in Russia. Over 60 areas of Russia commemorated the X International Day of Yoga (2024).

The interpersonal connections remain robust, accompanied by a gradual rise in bilateral tourism. The implementation of e-visas for both nations has expedited this process. Notable Indians have received Russian official honors for their contributions to the enhancement of political, scientific, and cultural relations between Russia and India. Russia has awarded the highest state honor, the Order of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First, to the Prime Minister.

CONCLUSION:

The bilateral partnership has been robust and consistent for over 75 years. The India-Russia alliance has been one of the most stable major ties in the contemporary world, characterized by a mutual commitment to a multipolar world, and is continually expanding beyond conventional domains of military, nuclear, and space collaboration. Over the past two years, bilateral trade has grown substantially, surpassing the previously established objective of \$30 billion for 2025. Discussions are underway regarding how to enhance exports from India through the development of new cooperative models. Numerous connectivity efforts are becoming increasingly crucial to bilateral collaboration, including the International North-South Transport Corridor and the Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor. Furthermore, both nations are dedicated to enhancing collaboration in the development of the Russian Far East and engaging jointly in research, logistics, and training in the Arctic region. A synergy exists between Russia's shift toward the East, its resources and technology, and India's key projects, like Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India.

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