

Lesson 28

India And Its Neighbours: China, Pakistan, And Sri Lanka

Summary -

Relations between India and Sri Lanka can generally be termed as friendly except for the brief spell in which the Tamil ethnic problem cast its shadow on the relations of the two countries. Conflictual issues between India and China pertain to Tibet and the border dispute. India recognised Chinese suzerainty over Tibet which is stated in the 1954 Agreement between India and China.

India and China

India and China are the two great giants of Asia

They are also two of the most ancient civilisations of the world

Historically, several historians have successfully traced the cultural linkages dating back to 2nd century BC

India fully supported China's claim for membership in the United Nations

also acknowledged China's claim over Formosa (Taiwan)

China appreciated India's neutral and mediatory role in easing the Korean problem

Boundary Dispute between India and China –

- The 1950s were marked by the boundary dispute between India and China.

- The flash point of which unfortunately caused a war between the two countries in 1962, China continued extending its borders and constructed a 110-mile-long road.
- In 1959 China put claim to some miles of Indian territory and denied the validity of McMahon Line.
- China-India relations did not show any improvement, China has done friendship with other countries to isolate India.

Normalisation of Relations -

- The two countries resumed diplomatic relations in 1976 by exchanging ambassadors.
- The efforts of normalisation of Sino-Indian relations received a boost when the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi paid a visit to China in 1988.

- ✚ The two countries pledged to settle the border dispute through dialogue.
- ✚ Several high levels visits followed including visit by Ex-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2003.
- ✚ Both are agreed to keep the border dispute apart and develop friendly relations in other fields.
- ✚ Until the border dispute is resolved both countries agreed to maintain peace and tranquillity on LAC.

India and Pakistan –

- ✚ No two countries in the world have so much in common as India and Pakistan.
- ✚ Yet they have perpetually been in a state of undeclared war with varying degree of intensity.
- ✚ Pakistan's aggression in Kargil (1999) brought the two countries even on the verge of a nuclear confrontation.
- ✚ During the freedom struggle the Muslim League, under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah propounded the two-nation theory, in support of a separate Muslim state.
- ✚ Jinnah insisted that since Hindus and Muslims were two communities two separate states must be constituted for the two communities.

The Kashmir Issue –

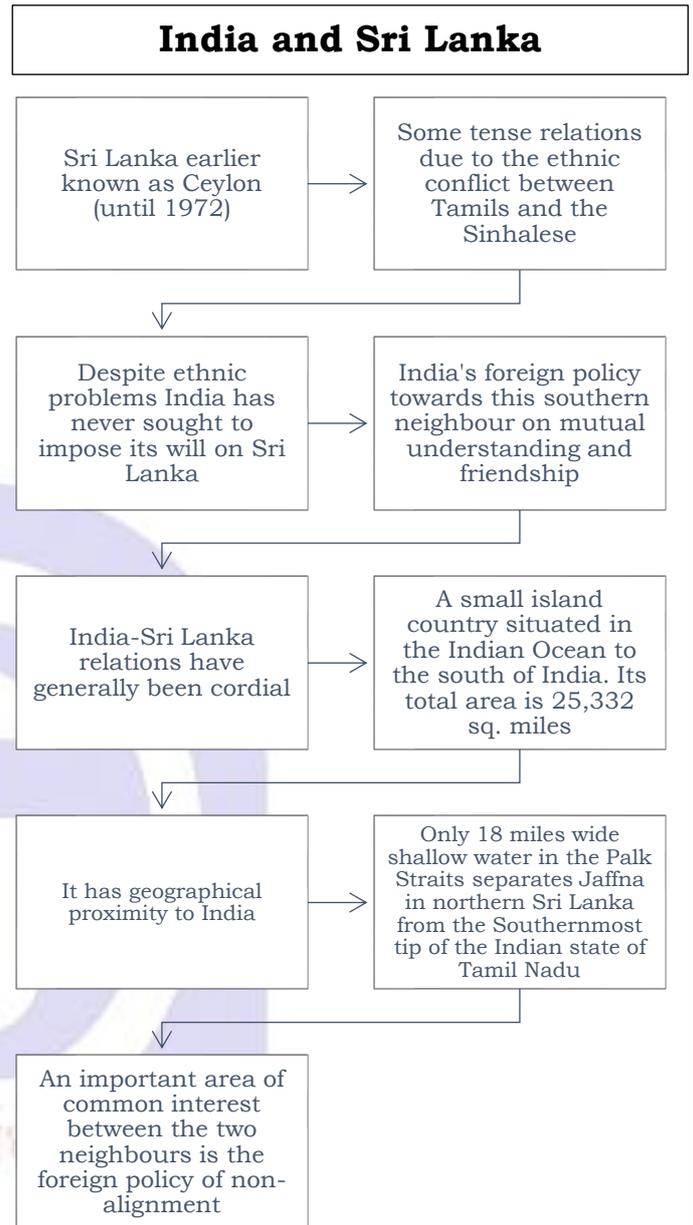
Pakistan developed a perception that it is an incomplete state without Kashmir being incorporated into it.

- ✚ On the other hand, India perceives Kashmir's accession and integration into India as an essential element of its secular and federal democratic structure.
- ✚ At the time of partition Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was one of those several princely states the fate of which was left uncertain in 1947. Pakistan desired that Kashmir with Muslim majority population should join Muslim country Pakistan.
- ✚ Maharaja Hari Singh did not take a decision until Pakistan sent armed intruders into the Kashmir valley in October 1947.
- ✚ Seeking Indian help to repulse the Pakistani intruders Maharaja signed the 'Instrument of Accession' making Jammu and Kashmir a part of Indian Union.
- ✚ To normalise relations India invited Pakistan for an agreement the result of which was the Shimla Pact of 1972.
- ✚ This Shimla agreement was the settlement of all bilateral problems including Kashmir mutually without the intervention of any third party.
- ✚ Under the Shimla Pact the Kashmir issue cannot be raised in international or any other forum.

- ✚ The agreement also talked about the return of Prisoners of War (POW).
- ✚ Though Pakistan's territory in India's possession was returned a new cease-fire line (in place of the old cease-fire line of 1948–49) was drawn which is known as the LoC.
- ✚ Pakistan continues to encourage terrorist & separatist tendencies in Kashmir operating mainly from terrorist training camps situated in POK.

Nuclear Tests & Efforts towards Improvement of Relations –

- ✚ Indo Pakistan relations acquired an entirely new dimension in the context of nuclear tests by both India and Pakistan in May 1998.
- ✚ India has agreed to bring Kashmir onto the agenda along with other areas of mutual benefits Pakistan conceded to bilateralism.
- ✚ Despite the many issues and problems, the unconditional dialogue has always been resumed with Pakistan.
- ✚ The emphasis in these talks is to promote people to people contacts across LoC & improve economic ties between India and Pakistan.



Problem of Indian Tamils –

- ✚ Jaffna province of Sri Lanka has large concentration of Tamil population.
- ✚ The problem became serious when Tamilians began demanding a national homeland or “Eelam” in northern Sri Lanka.
- ✚ It is important to understand that there are essentially two categories of Tamilians in Sri Lanka.

The Ceylon Tamils whose forefathers had migrated to Sri Lanka centuries ago and the second category is of Indian Tamils whose forefathers were taken by the Britishers as plantation workers in the 19th century. Many of them without citizenship and the problem of their status dominated early India-Sri Lanka relations.

- ✚ The issue of Tamilians and the policy pursued by government cast a dark shadow on Indo-Sri Lanka relations. India from time to time complained against the discriminatory policy of the Ceylon government.
- ✚ A territorial dispute arose between India and Sri Lanka over the ownership of one mile India and the only 300-yard-wide small island known as Kacchativu in 1968. In 1974 under the agreement signed between the two countries, India accepted Sri Lankan ownership of the island.

Tamil Separatism –

- ✚ The ethnic problem between Tamils and Sinhalese assumed serious proportions in 1983.

- ✚ As the gulf between the communities developed, militancy, separatist organisations became active.
- ✚ Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) demanded separate homeland for Tamils in 1988 – Tamil Eelam.
- ✚ A reign of terror was unleashed against the agitating Tamils in 1983.
 - ✚ The worst racial riots in the history of the country made thousands of Tamils refugees in India.
- ✚ India offered to help resolve the crisis, but it was interpreted as “Indian intervention in Sri Lanka” on behalf of the Tamils.
- ✚ When the situation became grim, India and Sri Lanka signed an agreement in 1987. India offered military assistance under the Accord. Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was sent to Sri Lanka to help restore normalcy in the country.
 - ✚ The deployment of IPKF was also an extension of India’s policy of reminding Sri Lanka and outside powers that if their involvement inside the region were to have an anti- Indian orientation.

Areas of Mutual Cooperation

India encouraged Sri Lanka to invite the peace process between the Tamils and the Sinhalese

In 1998 Sri Lanka invited Norway to work out a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem.

India stands for unity of Sri Lanka The greatest milestone of this process was the cease-fire agreement of 2002 between LTTE and Sri Lanka and the revival of the dialogue between the two.

From India's long-term point of view, Norway recognised India's legitimate interests in Sri Lanka and stated that it has no desire to come in the way of any Indian initiative to end the conflict in the region.

Evaluate yourself –

1. The India's relation with Sri Lanka has always been peaceful, write your views in your own words.
2. Write down the efforts done by India to maintain peace with Pakistan in brief.
3. Write your views on the India's relation with Neighbouring countries.

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