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OVERVIEW BRIEF

Indo-Korean Relations: An Overview

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Overview Brief

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Synopsis. This is an Overview Brief on Indo-Korean Relations by our Junior Research Analysts for the Indian International Law Programme.

1 Historical Background

According to “SamgukYusa” or “The Heritage History of the Three Kingdoms” written in the 13th century, a Princess from Ayodhya (Suriratna) went to Korea, married King Kim Suro, and became Queen Hur/Heo Hwang Ok in the year 48 AD. Nearly 6 million Koreans are the direct descendants of the Indian princess. Korean Buddhist monk Hyecho (or Hong Jiao) visited India from 723 to 729 AD and wrote a travelogue “Pilgrimage to the five kingdoms of India”, which gives a vivid account of Indian culture, politics and society.

Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore also composed a short but evocative poem – ‘Lamp of the East’ – in 1929 about Korea’s glorious past and its promising bright future. (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2020)

India was the Chair in 1947 of the Commission for elections in undivided Korea. India sponsored ceasefire resolution was accepted by both NK and SK thereby ending the war. Although India has no specific geo-political or strategic interests in the Korean peninsula, India played a unique role throughout the Korean War. It was so significant that Korea still commemorates the noble support that India provided during the tumultuous times.

India chaired the UN Commission that was formed to hold elections in Korea. At the United Nations, India’s Permanent Representative to the UN and a member of the UN’s Special Political Committee, V.K. Krishna Menon took on the responsibility of finding a solution to the pressing issue of the future of the prisoners of war. (2020) India maintained a neutral position in the Korean War and had sent medical teams (The Role of India in the Korean War, 2010) and custodian force to help the prisoners of war. The 60th Para Field Ambulance (also known as 60 Para) commanded by Lieutenant Colonel AG Rangaraj was sent to the war-stricken country. The total unit comprised 346 men, including four combat surgeons, two anaesthesiologists and one dentist. (2018) In addition to that the final armistice between North and South Korea was signed in front of the Indian General KS Thimayya. India has therefore always been considered as the middle-man between DPRK and ROK. It is purported that Indian sponsored resolution

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was accepted by Korea to end the War. (2017) In the present time as well the DPRK and ROK have equal inclinations towards India being the mediator in resolving the disputes between the two countries.

2 Similarities in the Indian & Korean Cultures

- The traditional Korean calendars are based on lunisolar calendar, depending on which the seasonal and traditional festivals are determined and celebrated. Similarly, the Indian Hindu calendar is also based on lunisolar calendar. In India, most of the seasonal festivals and agricultural practices, along with traditional festivals are determined according to this calendar.
- The structure and functioning of both the Indian and Korean society are relatively similar. Both the societies emphasize on respecting elders, behaving according to pre-determined norms and manners. The hierarchy system exists in the Korean society, which can be in Indian social practices too.
- In India as well as Korea, each individual's family name consists of three syllables/three words. In India, the first word is the name of that person, the second word is name of that individual's father/mother, and the third word is their surname which is mostly father's/husband's surname, but it may also consist of mother's surname. In Korea, the first syllable denotes the family name i.e. the surname, and the second and third syllable denotes the name of that individual.

Earlier, marriage between individuals of same family names were not allowed in South Korea as they are of same bloodline, but later on it was legally permitted. This practice is similar to the 'Gotra system' in India, which doesn't allow a marriage between two individuals of same gotra.

- Earlier Koreans had joint family system, in which it was the responsibility of the son to take care of his parents, and these families used have many children. Whereas now-a-days South Korean people have nuclear families. Similarly, in India we still have joint family system, especially in the rural areas, and nuclear families in urban areas. Also, earlier Indians used to have many children, but now-a-days the number of children is mostly limited to two.
- In the family systems of both the societies, a structured nomenclature for each relationship is determined, which is absent in the western society.
- Buddhism originated in India, and it is followed as a religion by 0.7% of the Indian population (according to the 2011 census). () Buddhism was first introduced in Korea in 372 CE by Chinese monks. Later on, it became one of the majorly followed religion in the country, till the spread of Christianity. According to 2015 statistics of South Korea, 44% of the Korean population has a religion out of which 35% follow Buddhism. (Korea.net)
- Indian culture and Korean culture share similar traditions, such as the memorial ceremony for one's ancestors. According to the Hindu religion, a traditional ritual of 'Shraddha' is done to let the embodied soul get liberated and to progress towards attaining the final liberation. It is a ritual to repay the debts towards demised

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ancestors, helping them in achieving peace. Similarly, a Korean traditional ceremony named 'Jesa/Jerye' is performed to demonstrate appreciation and respect towards their ancestors. They believe that taking care of one's ancestors will make the ancestors more disposed to take care of and watch over their living descendants.

- The Korean language 'Hangul' and certain South Indian languages such as 'Tamil' and 'Kannada' are similar in nature. They have certain words in common, and also have similar grammatical structures.

3 Indo-DPRK Relations

India and North Korea are both democratic republics according to their respective constitutions. The consular relations with Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) were set up on 1 March 1962 and diplomatic relations on 10 December 1973. (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2019) However, relations between the two countries have been established from the time when India provided humanitarian assistance and third party talks to DPRK in the Korean War. The relations were further augmented when a number of bilateral agreements were signed between India and DPRK which mainly pertained to cultural exchange and science and technology agreements. However, the relation between these countries did suffer tumultuous times specifically owing to the nuclear deals of DPRK and its deteriorating relations with The United States of America.

The two countries are connected at various bases ranging from cultural to humanitarian and the governments of both the countries have been focusing on the increasing relations between both the countries through bilateral agreements of various kinds. Multi-ferrous bilateral agreements were ratified by both the countries between the period of 1973 and 2000 which includes agreements for cultural cooperation, scientific and technological exchange, protocol for cooperation between the two external affairs ministries and even the agreement for knowledge exchange between Indian National Science Academy and DPRK. Surprisingly, the goodwill between the two countries have been established much before the ratification of the bilateral agreements a fact which is oblivious to many. Apart from cultural proximity DPRK and India have had economic relations as well.

In 2017, following the directions of UN Security Council sanctions that prevent the trade of any item North Korea, India had decided to supply only food and medicines to Pyongyang. It is important from the point of view of international trade given the point that at that time India was the second largest trading partner after China. India had exported \$111 million worth of goods in 2015-2016 to North Korea, and imported about \$88 million, according to Indian government data. However, the ban imposed by USA on North Korea had taken a toll over the economic activities between the countries and India had banned all trade with North Korea, except for food and medicines.

India and DPRK have also been connected in the propagation of importance of traditional knowledge, especially traditional medicine. Furthermore, India has participated in several film festivals hosted by DPRK. The countries have also been active in cooperating for technological and educational exchange activities. The Centre for Space

Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific situated in Dehradun has received almost thirty students DPRK students since 1996. Furthermore, DPRK football players participated in FIFA U-17 Championship held in India.

India constantly maintained a neutral position with DPRK. India has been constantly maintaining relations with the country when the entire world was against the country after its fallout with USA. As per 2019 report of Ministry of External Affairs “Relations between India and DPRK have been generally characterised by friendship, cooperation and understanding.” (2020) Furthermore, India gave DPRK, the status of ‘Most Favoured Nation’ and eventually a trade agreement was signed in 1978. (2020) DPRK has also maintained a friendly stand with India, including supporting of India’s position as the permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. The relations of the countries extend way beyond global timelines. They are connected by cultural, political and ideological proximities including both the countries being supporters of non-alignment.

3.1 Issues between India & DPRK

The relations between the two countries have recently been in turmoil owing to the number of reasons most significantly the one related to increasing nuclear exchange between Pakistan and DPRK. In 1990 a nuclear deal was signed between Pakistan and DPRK. It is even purported that the increase in nuclear strength of DPRK is a result of the its improved relations with Pakistan and that Pakistan is helping DPRK in building nuclear prowess. (2017) After the withdrawal of DPRK from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty the US intelligence agency was of the view that Pakistan was a key supplier of uranium enrichment technology to North Korea. (2006) The suspicion later turned true when Pakistani officials admitted to have transferred the said technology. The relations between DPRK and Pakistan reached the highest stage with the visit Benazir Bhutto to DPRK in 1993 which raised conjectures about the increasing cooperation between the two countries specifically with relation to coordination in technology related to the Weapons of Mass Destruction. This was a direct blow to the forever friendly stand that India held towards DPRK. After the period the relations between the two countries have been quite uneven with restricted visits of the representatives of each state to the other country. Furthermore, the relation between the countries also turned ripe after the UN Report alleging DPRK to have hacked Indian nuclear facilities and space research centres. (Asia Times, 2019) Cyberattacks were received in ISRO and Kudankulam NPP through the DTrack malware created by Lazarus group of DPRK.

3.2 Current state of affairs

Despite all the tubulations in the relations between the two countries, the countries have been successful in creating a strong neutral ground for dialogue and cooperation. Both the countries have their respective embassies in the other’s capital city. However, there is a pervading silence in each of the embassies with scanner information being

exchanged at each time. Atul Malhari Gotsurve who is the Indian ambassador to Pyongyang said that the situation in NK amid COVID 19 was normal. This is however the first time that he communicated with an Indian channel. In 2019, V.K Singh was the first Indian Minister to visit DPRK after the span of twenty years. Major achievements of the visit were the signing of the logistic support to navies and the talks over the defence education exchange. India also expressed its concerns over the nuclear proliferation of DPRK in Pakistan and its politico-economic tussle with USA.

India's major strategic standpoint with DPRK and the countries to the east is on the basis of the Act East Policy to enhance cooperation among the states. Although DPRK and Pakistan have signed several nuclear and missile technology exchanges deal, which is a threat to India as well as RoK. India is one of the few countries which has sustained diplomatic relations with North Korea and continues to extend humanitarian assistance to DPRK. The Korea-India Friendship Association (KIFA) is one of the significant steps to ensure that cooperation is maintained among all the three countries. India also supports the Joint Peace initiative between ROK and DPRK based on the four no's (no isolation of North Korea, no regime collapse in Pyongyang, no war-like situation on the Korean Peninsula, and no nuclear proliferation pledged by North Korea) (2019) approach. India thus considers dual track approach establishing good relations with both ROK and DPRK.

4 Indo-South Korea Relations

4.1 Legal Changes

- An Indian academic Bonojit Hussain, who worked as a research professor at Seoul's Song Kang Hoe University faced a racial assault in July 2009. While travelling with a female colleague through a public transport bus, a passenger assaulted Bonojit and his companion, and made derogatory remarks based on his skin color. Afterwards Bonojit filed a complaint with police, but they didn't co-operate with him, and asked him to apologize to the assaulter. So, he approached the country's National Human Rights Commission a month later "to complain against police behaviour". (India Today, 2009) Hussain argued that his personal rights were infringed because the country did not have a law to punish racial discrimination. The matter went to court and the assaulter was indicted for racial abuse. (Hindustan Times, 2009) This case was a part of the reason which made the South Korean National Assembly to discuss an anti-racism bill.

4.2 Economic Relations

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

- India and Republic of Korea (South Korea) signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in Seoul on 7 August 2009, and it was implemented from 1 January 2010. As a result of CEPA, the trade and economic relations of both the

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countries started developing faster as compared to earlier economic interactions. According to the trade deal, both the countries are to lower the import tariffs imposed on a wide range of goods for next eight years, and to create more opportunities for investments and trade in goods and services. India provides a huge market as a consumer as well as for production. CEPA has led to opening of service markets in both the countries. In India it consisted of telecommunications, construction, distribution (retail excluded), transportation, industrial, accounting, building, real estate, medical treatment and energy distribution, etc. Also, the establishment of 10 Korean banks in India was agreed upon.

- During the Summit meeting in 2015, for upgradation and effective implementation of the CEPA, both the countries had established a Ministerial Joint Committee headed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India and the Korean Ministry of Trade. Regular meetings are held, and a Joint Future Strategy Group is formed for identification and development of more projects between the two countries.

Imports and Exports.

- The major items exported by India to South Korea are mineral fuels, oil, distillates (mainly naphtha), cereals, iron and steel, cotton, and organic chemicals. Naphtha is one of the most highly exported material.
- The main items exported by South Korea to India consists of automobile parts, telecommunication equipment, hot rolled iron products, petroleum refined products, base lubricating oils, nuclear reactors, mechanical appliances, electrical machinery & parts and iron & steel products.
- South Korea is an export driven economy to which India provides a huge market. South Korea has gained expertise in certain sectors such as ship building, nuclear energy, heavy electrical machinery, advanced technological equipment, etc, and it is interested in investing into such sectors of India. According to the data of 2018, India is South Korea's 20th biggest source for imports and 7th biggest export market. ()

Bilateral trade.

The bilateral trade between India and South Korea in 2011 crossed \$20.5 billion, registering 70% growth in the two years period. But since then the bilateral trade declined to \$18.13 billion in 2014-15, \$16.56 billion in 2015-16, \$16.82 in 2016-17, and it recovered in the beginning of 2017, registering a growth of 30%. (2017) The trade relations between India and South Korea have grown in recent years with annual bilateral trade reaching \$21.5 billion in 2018, crossing \$20 billion mark for the first time. Bilateral trade in Jan-Nov 2019, according to the latest data of December 2019, was recorded as \$19.05 billion.

South Korean investments in India.

- South Korean Foreign Direct Investment in India according to the latest data of September 2019 is of \$6.29 billion, as per the Export-Import Bank of Korea, of which

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\$198 million was received in 2010, \$452 million in 2011, \$311 million in 2012, \$342 million in 2013, \$325 million in 2014, \$314 million in 2015, \$330 million in 2016 and \$514 million in 2017, \$1,053 million in 2018 and \$340 million in January - September 2019. Major South Korean companies such as Hyundai Motor Group, Kia Motors, Samsung Electronics and LG Group have largely invested in India.

- Hyundai Motors has established an automotive plant in Tamil Nadu with a capacity to produce more than 6,50,000 cars annually. For the expansion of Sriperumbudur unit it has invested \$1.05 billion, where manufacturing of electric vehicles will be done. Kia Motors, a sister company of Hyundai Group has announced a two phased investment of \$1.6 billion to set up two manufacturing units in Ananthapur, Andhra Pradesh.
- Samsung Electronics has announced an investment of \$780 million to expand its smartphones manufacturing factory present in Noida. This factory is the world's largest mobile manufacturing unit. Samsung also has a factory in Sriperumbudur (Tamil Nadu) and has five Research and Development Centres in India. LG Electronics has established two factories in India, one in Noida and the other in Pune. It also has a Research and Development Centre in Bangalore. The LG Group has collaborated with certain Indian Groups for further investment and production in India.
- Youngone Corporation, a textile firm has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Telangana Government to establish a \$ 300 million factory in Warangal with capacity of 10,000 jobs. Hyosung Corporation, global spandex leader, has announced to invest \$450 million in a greenfield spandex manufacturing facility in Aurangabad Industrial City, Maharashtra with an initial capacity to generate 1000 jobs. Lotte confectionary has acquired a Gujrat-based unit of Havmor, and has invested in Chennai and Rohtak. South Korea has proposed to establish a Korean Industrial Park at Ghiloth in the State of Rajasthan. There are 450 South Korean firms functioning in the southern parts of India.

Indian Investments in South Korea.

- Novelis Inc., a subsidiary of Hindalco Industries Ltd., the flagship company of the Aditya Birla Group, acquired Alcan Taihan Aluminium Ltd. in January 2005. Novelis Inc. holds 68% share amounting to about US\$ 600 million in Novelis Korea Ltd. Novelis' total investment in South Korea is over \$700 million.
- Tata Motors Limited, acquired Daewoo Commercial Vehicle based in Gunsan, Korea for a total price of KRW 120 billion (approximately \$102 million) in March 2004. Its cumulative investment now is over \$400 million.
- Mahindra and Mahindra (M&M) in August 2010 acquired a majority stake in Ssangyong Motors, which is South Korea's 4th largest manufacturer with an investment of \$ 360 million. Its cumulative investment now has crossed \$ 1.5 billion.
- Nakhoda Ltd, one of the largest Indian producers of yarn acquired Kyunghan Industry Company with an investment of \$40 million.

- Also, Indian IT majors such as Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), L&T Infotech and Mahindra Tech have established its operations in South Korea, along with Indian Overseas Bank and State Bank of India.

Indian Chamber of Commerce in Korea (ICCK).

The Indian Chamber of Commerce in Korea was established in January 2010 to help interested South Korean companies in doing business with India. It has been assisting the Indian Embassy in organizing various business-related events in South Korea.

Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry was established in June 2018 in Tamil Nadu. The main objective of the Chamber is to promote the rights of South Korean companies and to create job opportunities for Koreans, as there are 450 South Korean firms in the Southern India and nearly 6,000 Koreans reside in this region.

Korea Plus.

The Korea Plus is a strategic bilateral initiative between the Republic of India and the Republic of Korea to promote, facilitate and retain Korean investments in India. It was operationalized in June 2016. It is envisaged as the first reference point for the South Korean investors in India. Korea Plus acts as a one-stop agency for South Korean investors and works closely with the embassies, central and state governments, industry associations and corporates to generate leads and facilitate Korean investments. (2018) Korea Plus comprises of representatives from the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Energy of South Korea, Korea Trade Investment and Promotion Agency (KOTRA), and Invest India.

Analysis.

In the recent years, an increase in the interactions of India and South Korea can be noticed. These interactions have mainly resulted into the development of economic relations between the two countries.

South Korea is an export dependent country. South Korean products can be found in the markets of countries across the world. The two top export destinations of South Korea are China and USA. But due to the continuous trade war between these two countries, the export rate of South Korean economy is declining causing major loss. Also, China's economic policies for South Korea consists of its political interests, which poses a threat to South Korea, taking into consideration the present situation in the Korean Peninsula. It has created tensions between the two countries. At the same time India provides the largest consumer market, and the Indian economy has greatest growth potential. Also, along with large consumer market, India also provides better deals for establishment and functioning of new manufacturing businesses. The cost of labour and the cost of production in India is relatively lower, which is very much profitable for the investors. Thus, the South Korean companies have a larger scale for manufacturing, production, and sales in India. And since major South Korean companies

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such as Samsung, LG, and Hyundai are already widely famous in India, it will be easy to access the Indian markets. The new initiatives launched by the Government of India such as 'Make in India', 'Skill India', 'Digital India', 'Start-up India' and 'Smart Cities Mission' provide various benefitting opportunities to foreign companies, thus increasing Foreign Direct Investment in India. And already various companies are shifting their units from China and Hong Kong to India creating more opportunities as well as benefits for both the sides.

South Korea has had one of the fastest economic transformation from agriculture-based economy to one of the top exporters in the world. This transformation was made due to effective growth of innovation, technology, and research and development (R&D). South Korea's policies opened their economy for foreign trade, it created strong business environment, and encouraged its domestic growth. Whereas, even if India is a developing country, it is hugely dependent on imports. And since various choices for selecting products is provided, the local/domestic producers in the country are getting removed from the markets. Hence, India should learn from the South Korean economy's structure and try to make reformative changes in India's economic structure. But for the above reformative changes and improvements, effective and efficient functioning of the Indian commercial, industrial and economic agencies is required at domestic as well as international levels. India needs to emphasize and encourage innovation, and R&D, so that it will lead us to the desired results, simultaneously developing new technologies.

For example – India can try to increase its exports to South Korea by manufacturing demand-driven products, such as ayurvedic products (especially cosmetics), organic products, agricultural products (fruits, vegetables, flowers), etc. Since India is an agrarian economy, by making some qualitative changes and improvements, it can utilize this advantage for increasing exports. Also, India needs to intensify its marketing strategies in the South Korean markets, because of the present lack of Indian products' advertisements, it is simultaneously negatively affecting demands.

South Korea's choice for India is best explained in the words of Trade Minister Kim Hyun Chong who said, "India is a country that has no sensitive issues with us geopolitically, so has little risk of its economic cooperation wavering due to external factors. China, for example, created serious problems for our country over the THAAD issue, but with India there are no such variables." (2018) As a result of which we can see the upgradation in the relations of both the countries, especially during the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South Korean President Moon Jae In's governments' interactions.

4.3 Political Relations & Agreements (Embassy of India, Seoul, Republic of Korea)

- 1962 - The bilateral consular relations were established between India and the Republic of Korea (South Korea).
- 1973 - These relations were upgraded to Ambassador level.
- February 2006 – President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam had a state visit to the Republic of Korea. It started a vibrant phase in India – ROK relations.

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- It resulted in the launching of a Joint Task Force to conclude a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).
- 7 August 2009 - Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement was signed between the India and ROK, which was implemented from 1 January 2010.
- 26 January 2010 – South Korean President Lee visited India as the Chief Guest of India’s Republic Day celebrations.
 - During this visit, the bilateral ties between the two countries were raised to the level of Strategic Partnership.
- 24 – 27 July 2011 – Indian President Pratibha Patil had a state visit to ROK.
- During this visit, the Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation Agreement was signed.
- March 2012 – Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh paid an official visit to Seoul for the Nuclear Security Summit and for discussing bilateral ties between the two nations.
 - During which the Visa Simplification Agreement was signed.
- 15 – 18 January 2014 – South Korean President Park Geun Hye had a state visit to India.
 - During this visit, the “Joint Statement for Expansion of Strategic Partnership” that was issued, unveiling a blueprint for further expansion in the relations between the two countries in political, security, defence, economic, scientific & technological, IT, cultural and people-to-people relations.
 - During this visit of South Korean President Park Geun-hye to India: (2014)
 - Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning of the Republic of Korea on a Joint Applied Research and Development Programme in Science and Technology.
 - The Implementing Agreement Between the Indian Space Research Organization and the Korea Aerospace Research Institute for cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space was signed.
 - Establishment of the India-ROK ICT Policy Forum was agreed on by both countries, in which cooperation on software and information security will be discussed.
 - The MOU on Cyber Security between Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (Cert-In) and Korea Internet & Security Agency (KISA) was concluded.
 - MoU on the establishment of Nalanda University was signed.
- 28 – 30 December 2014 – Indian External Affairs Minister visited South Korea and co-chaired the India – ROK Joint Commission Meeting.
- 18 – 19 May 2015 – Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a state visit of ROK.
 - During this visit, the bilateral relations between the two countries were upgraded to ‘Special Strategic Partnership’.
 - In the ‘Joint Statement for Special Strategic Partnership’, PM Modi and President Park Geun Hye agreed to establish a 2+2 consultation mechanism at the level of the Secretary/Vice Minister of Foreign Office and Defence Ministry.
 - The leaders agreed on strengthening cooperation on energy, electronics and ship-building industries along with investments in infrastructural projects in India.

- The revised Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement was signed between the two countries.
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Korea on Cooperation in Audio-Visual Co-production
- MOU for Cooperation between the National Security Council Secretariat of the Republic of India and the Office of National Security of the Republic of Korea
- MOU between the Ministry of Power of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy of the Republic of Korea concerning Cooperation in the field of Electric Power Development and New Energy Industries
- MOU between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of the Republic of Korea on Cooperation in Youth Matters
- Framework of Cooperation in the Field of Road Transport and Highways between the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of the Republic of Korea
- MOU between the Ministry of Shipping of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea on Cooperation in the Fields of Maritime Transport and Logistics. (2015)
- April 2015 – Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar visited South Korea to co-chair the Defence Ministerial Meeting.
- 6 November 2015 – Indian Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan visited South Korea to co-chair 3rd India – Korea Science and Technology Steering Committee Meeting.
- 15 – 18 May 2016 – Chief Justice of India T. S. Thakur, accompanied by Supreme Court judges visited South Korea to attend the Incheon Trade Law Forum.
- 8 September 2016 – PM Modi and President Park had bilateral meetings on the sidelines of East Asia Summit in Vientiane, Laos. They discussed about the progress made in the bilateral relations of both the countries.
- 27 March 2016 – South Korean Minister of the Defence Acquisition Program Administration visited Goa to co-chair the Joint Committee Meeting with Department of Defence Production and to participate at the Defence Expo India 2016.
- 14 – 16 April 2016- South Korean Minister of Oceans and Fisheries Kim Young-Suk visited India for the Maritime India Summit 2016 held in Mumbai.
- 27 – 29 March 2017 – South Korean Vice Foreign Minister Lim Sung Nam visited India to review the bilateral relations between the two countries.
- 22 April 2017 - South Korean Minister of the Defence Acquisition Program Administration visited India to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in ship building as agreed during the visit of PM Modi to South Korea.
- 2017 – South Korean President Moon Jae In sent the former Culture Minister Chung Dongchea, as his special envoy to India; it was the first such instance in the bilateral relationship, and announced about the upgrade in the relationship with India equivalent to four traditional partners under the “New Asia Community Plus” framework.
- 14 – 16 June 2017 – Indian Finance and Defence Minister Arun Jaitley visited South Korea to conclude the talks on the Economic Development Cooperation Fund

(EDCF), an MoU between the EXIM banks of two countries was signed, along with reviewing of ongoing defence relationship between the two countries.

- 9 – 12 April 2018 – The Indian Minister of Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari along with 30 Indian business delegations visited the RoK.
 - An MoU of Sea fares was signed between the two countries, and the India-Korea Maritime Forum was held.
- 8 July 2017 – PM Modi and President Moon had a bilateral meeting on the side lines of the G-20 Summit in Hamburg.
- 21 – 27 September 2017 – The Indian Minister of Commerce & Industry, Suresh Prabhu visited South Korea to participate in the 7th Asia-Europe Economic Ministers meeting and the 3rd Joint Ministerial Review of the India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.
- 8 – 11 July 2018 – President Moon paid a state visit to India.
 - During the visit he held talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on several issues, including the situation on the Korean peninsula and ways to boost bilateral trade and defence cooperation.
 - 11 MoUs/Agreements were signed between the two countries.
- 5 – 7 September 2018 - Shri Thawarchand Gehlot, Hon'ble Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, visited Seoul to participate in the "3rd ASEM Conference on Global Ageing and Human Rights of Older Persons"
- 4 – 7 November 2018 - First Lady of the Republic of Korea Kim Jung-sook visited India as the Chief Guest at the Deepotsav event being organised by the State Government of Uttar Pradesh and the ground-breaking ceremony of the Queen Suriratna (Heo Hwang-ok) Memorial in Ayodhya.
- 21 – 22 February 2019 – PM Modi visited the ROK. (2019)
 - During this visit PM Modi and President Moon held constructive talks on enhancing cooperation in trade and investment, defence and security, energy, space, start-ups and people-to-people exchanges.
 - India and South Korea signed six agreements to enhance cooperation in infrastructure development, media, start-ups, and combating trans-border and international crime.
 - An MoU was signed between the South Korean National Police Agency and the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs to enhance cooperation between the law enforcement agencies of the two countries and combat trans-border and international crimes.
 - The two countries signed an agreement to continue operations of Korea Plus organization.
 - The National Highways Authority of India and Korea Expressway Corporation signed an MoU to promote bilateral cooperation in road and transport infrastructure development projects of India, and facilitate technical and institutional knowledge exchange in the field of road and transport.
 - An agreement was signed on fisheries and aquaculture for strengthening cooperation by encouraging exchanges, organising training workshops and development and utilisation of marine science and technology in the fields of fisheries and aquaculture.

- MoU on Start-up Cooperation was signed to promote collaboration among Start-ups and to set up of a Korea Start-up Centre (KSC) in India to commercialize ideas, technologies and designs of Start-up companies.
- The Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) and Prasar Bharti agreed to facilitate the broadcast of DD India Channel in South Korea and KBS World Channel in India.
- Another agreement was signed for releasing a joint stamp, commemorating Princess Suriratna (Queen Heo Hwang-ok), a legendary Princess of Ayodhya, who went to Korea in AD 48 and married King Kim-Suro.
- PM Modi received the Seoul Peace Prize by the Seoul Peace Prize Foundation.
- 4 – 6 September 2019 – Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited Seoul to participate in the Seoul Defence Dialogue-2019 (The Ministers of different Indian Ministries and Chief Ministers of various Indian states along with their delegations have visited South Korea. These visits have been regarding investments in the states of India by South Korean companies, agreements between the two parties, to observe functioning of respective systems present in South Korea, etc.)

Analysis.

The political relations between India and South Korea have been developing profoundly since the last two decades. Both the countries have experienced state visits by the representatives and officials of the other country, during which various agreements in different sectors have been made. Also, in the recent few years we observe growing interactions between the states of India and ministries, and companies of ROK. Chief Ministers of various Indian states along with their delegations have been visiting and collaborating with South Korean parties. It is further on strengthening the bond between the two nations. Now, both the countries are leading more interactions and making deals in the previously unexplored areas, such as space, transportation systems, shipbuilding, etc. Due to such agreements India is getting aware with the advanced technical know-hows, which creates an opportunity for India to use this knowledge for its domestic growth and development. These political relations between India and ROK are leading to development assistance, enhanced trade, and multi-layered collaborations.

Another significance of the strategic political relations between India and ROK is that it creates a basis for international cooperation between the two countries by supporting each-others decisions, and standings while functioning as a part of an international organization. Since both the countries are situated in Asian continent, these relations strengthen the regional assistance and regional relations through collective functioning of the member countries of that specific region. Such organizations provide larger opportunities for development and cooperation. For example – South Korea is a member of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), and it supported India's bid for membership.

The basic building block of these enhanced relations between India and ROK are formed by the foreign policies of the two countries. India's 'Act East Policy' implemented by the Modi Government is an improved version of the 'Look East Policy' launched in 1991. This policy is a diplomatic initiative to develop and strengthen economic, strategic and cultural relations with the countries of Asia-Pacific region. South

Korean President Moon Jae In launched the 'New Southern Policy' which aims to strengthen the economic and strategic relations with South-east Asian countries. Thus, the foreign policies of India and ROK have led to creation of collective interactions between the two countries. Both the countries are moving forward and establishing ties in all possible domains emphasizing on the people to people interactions and cultural exchanges. And according to the two countries, these interactions and exchanges shapes their social, political, economic and strategic perspectives of the other country.

India and South Korea face similar political and security issues, which creates larger potential for cooperation between the two. India and China constantly face conflicts in the border regions. Chinese troops are constructing roads along the Indian border in the Tibet region and the north-eastern border region. China also claims the Indian territory of Arunachal Pradesh and some parts of Ladakh as its own. It is also establishing its authority in the Indian Ocean Region by acquiring the ports and territories of countries like Sri Lanka and Maldives and has established its naval units. Also, recently Nepal has claimed the Indian regions of Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh situated in Uttarakhand as its own. Prime Minister of Nepal K.P. Sharma Oli represents the communist party, and China is a communist state. The Chinese strategy in acquiring the territories of other countries is that it provides large amount of loans to the neighbouring small countries, which later on these countries are unable to pay, and as repayment of these loans, China acquires territories of these countries and establishes its military units. Thus, India is nearly surrounded by China and its allies including Pakistan. South Korea is facing continuous threat from North Korea, and the tensions between South Korea and China are rising. North Korea is against the presence of American forces in South Korea, and it is threatening the two countries by testing its nuclear missiles. USA has imposed strict sanctions on North Korea which even after the meetings between the leaders of the two countries, were not eased. So, with the help of China, North Korea is constantly pressuring South Korea and indirectly USA. At the same time, trade war is going between China and USA which is not declining any sooner. Also, there has been a nuclear missiles technology exchange between Pakistan and North Korea. Thus, India and South Korea are threatened by communist and communism-influenced countries.

In addition to the land conflicts, China's dominance in the Indo-Pacific region and the South China Sea is causing conflicts between the countries functioning in that region and China. It is intervening in the territories of other countries in the ocean region, and is deliberately establishing and acting based on its own rules, neglecting the agreements made between all the neighbouring nations. China's maritime strategy is almost universally seen as a challenge to the present status quo in the Asia-Pacific region. Chinese activism; such as the declaration of an Air-Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) extending towards the Senkaku Islands , new fishing rules implemented on the Hainan coast , building runways and radar facilities on new islets in the South China Sea and, the PLA-Navy shadowing of passing naval vessels , are but a few of the methods Beijing has used to impose its will on the region. Moreover, China's naval modernisation has transformed its navy into one of the most formidable forces in the region. Skirmishes in the South China Sea are increasing in quantum and frequency and are making

routine activity on the high seas (guaranteed under United Nation Convention on Law of the Sea UNCLOS) a fraught proposition. (2016)

China is restricting the freedom of navigation by confronting the ships and vessels of other countries. South China Sea is the only way for naval trade among USA, European countries and Asian countries. South Korea's exports and imports are majorly done through this region, and the dominant presence of China posts a massive economic risk to South Korea. According to South Korea, it has a strategic interest in the disputed region of South China Sea as it consists of the key shipping lane through which majority of the South Korean trade is done. In the case of India, by acquiring ports and territories of the neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka, China is keeping a constant watch on India. It also has situated its naval units and submarines in the Indian Ocean Region. Hence, India, South Korea, Japan, USA, and ASEAN countries are worried about Chinese maritime activism. Still, India is very cautious of the decisions and actions made by China, and its impact on the neighbouring countries and India. A quadrilateral system has been created by India, Japan, Australia and USA to observe China's activity in the Indo-Pacific Region, and to indirectly pressurize it.

4.4 Defence Relations

- September 2010 - Defence Minister AK Antony visited ROK.
 - During this visit important agreements were signed including MoUs on Defence Cooperation, and Defence Research and Development.
 - India agreed to set up a Defence Wing at its Embassy at Seoul, which opened on 26 October 2012.
 - December 2012 - Minister of National Defence of ROK Mr Kim, Kwan Jin visited India
- January 2014 – ROK President Park Geun Hye visited India.
 - During this visit a bilateral Agreement on the Protection of Classified Military Information was signed between the two countries.
 - It was also agreed to hold a regular dialogue between the national security structures of the two sides.
- April 2015 - Defence Minister of India Manohar Parrikar visited ROK
- 2017 - A contract between L&T of India and M/s Hanwha Techwin of ROK has been signed for production of one hundred tracked self-propelled 155mm/52 calibre artillery guns 'K-9 Vajra' for Indian Armed Forces. (Embassy of India, Seoul, Republic of Korea)
- June 2017 - Defence Minister of India Arun Jaitley visited ROK.
- July 2018 - ROK President Moon Jae-in visited India. He held a summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In a joint statement the two leaders agreed to explore further possibilities to coordinate efforts in the defence and strategic spheres in order to benefit from each-others unique capabilities and experience and in this context agreed to enhance military exchange, training and experience sharing, Research & Development and to enhance defence industry cooperation.

- September 2019 - Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited ROK.

The Defence Ministers of the two countries signed two agreements: To extend logistical support to each other's navies, and to deepen defence educational exchanges. (Observer Research Foundation (ORF), 2019)

- February 2020 – South Korean Defence Minister and the South Korean defence industries attended the Defence Expo-2020 at Lucknow.

Exchanges:

- There are regular and active exchanges of bilateral visits by delegations of India and ROK, from various military training establishments that include the National Defence College (NDC), higher command and management courses and training centre for United Nations peace keeping operations.
- Officers from ROK attend the NDC & the Defence Services Staff College in India while Indian officers attend courses in Korea National Defence University & Joint Forces Military University.
- Several forums have been established between India and ROK for regular interactions between their respective Defence Ministries.
 - 2013 - The Defence Policy Dialogue (DPD) instituted at the level of Deputy Minister were established, and since then it has been upgraded to the level of Defence Secretary and will now be a part of '2+2 Dialogue', between the two countries.
 - Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) was established for conducting bilateral dialogues between Minister DAPA and Secretary (DP) for cooperation in defence industries and logistics.
 - Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) is a bilateral dialogue for joint defence R&D between DRDO & DAPA / ADD (ROK).

Analysis.

Since India and South Korea face similar political and security issues, the defence and maritime agreements between the two nations are advantageous to both. As mentioned in the analysis of the political relations, both the nations are constantly facing territorial military threats. To prepare for such situations, trainings and drills between the defence forces of the two nations will increase knowledge about different techniques that can be utilized during a war.

India is one of the largest importers of defence material in the world. Through cooperation between the defence material manufacturing industries of India and South Korea, the technical knowledge of weapons manufactured, its process of production, how it is to be used, its unique qualities, etc is shared between the two parties. Also, the Indian private companies and industries get a chance to contribute to the country's defence system, which actually consists of an individual military structure controlled by the central government. Through the initiative of 'Make in India', India has invited various South Korean defence material manufacturing companies to invest and manufacture their products in India. In South Korea a minimum of 2 years of military service is mandatory to all men.

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4.5 Maritime Cooperation

Bilateral Maritime cooperation is an important aspect in the defence and security relations between India and ROK.

- March 2005 - A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Indian and South Korean coast guards.
- July 2006 - Joint coast guard exercises between the two countries.
- Navy and Coast Guard ships regularly visit each other's ports and joint exercises are held between the two countries.
- India and ROK cooperated regularly in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.
- 2016 – ROK participated in the Maritime India Summit
- 2017 - Three ROK Navy ships visited Indian ports and held exercises with the Indian Navy, while ICG Ship “SHAURYA” visited ROK.
- 21 April 2017 - An Inter-Governmental MoU was signed between the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence of India and Ministry of Defence Acquisition Program Administration of ROK to partner in naval ship building. ()
- 2017 - State-owned Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. (HSL) will collaborate with Hyundai Heavy Industries Co. Ltd. of ROK for defence production under 'Make in India' program.
- April 2018 - One Korean Coast Guard (KCG)ship visited India and participated in SAREX-18, conducted by Indian Coast Guard (ICG).
- The 9th High level meeting was held between the Commissioner General Korean Coast Guard and his delegation along with the Director General, and ICG, while the Indian Coast Guard participated as an observer in MMEX (Multilateral Multi-Disciplinary Exercise) hosted by KCG (Embassy of India, Seoul, Republic of Korea).
- April 2019 - Indian naval ships Kolkata and Shakti visited Busan to participate in the ADMM-Plus Maritime Security Field Training Exercise (FTX) as part of deployment of the Eastern Fleet to the South China Sea (Observer Research Foundation (ORF), 2019).

Analysis.

As earlier mentioned in the analysis of political relations, maritime relations between India and South Korea hold very much significance. Due to which regular Coast Guard ships visits to each other's country is important along with organization of drills and trainings between the two naval forces. These drills help in understanding the new technical functioning of weapons and ships, along with how to do strategic planning. Also, agreements of shipbuilding have been made between the two countries, creating opportunities for private companies to collaborate and contribute.

The main focus of the India - South Korea maritime relations is the South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific Region. To tackle the problems formed by China's assertiveness, India and South Korea need to function collectively, along with other South-east Asian countries.

4.6 Sports Relations

- November 2018 - A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Sports Ministers of India and South Korea on cooperation in sports.
 - The objective of the MoU is to establish a framework to facilitate and promote cooperation between the two countries on the basis of reciprocity and mutual benefit. (All India Radio, 2018)
 - The sports cooperation MoU includes the exchange of coaches, athletes and experts, as well as scientific and methodical materials, and the implementation of joint training programmes.
 - It will also encourage practical exchanges in elite sports, sports for all, sports for the disabled, sports science, anti-doping, taekwondo, kabaddi and other athletic events. (Hindustan Times, 2018)
- 2016 – Kabaddi players from ROK participated in the 2016 Kabaddi World Cup, in India.
- Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) – South Korean Kabaddi players have been participating in the Indian PKL regularly.

4.7 Cultural Relations

- 1st July 2011 - The Cultural Centre of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations of India, 'Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre' (SVCC) was established in Seoul.
- Another Indian Culture Centre is established in Busan based on a Public Private Partnership model. The Indian Culture Centre in Busan has been promoting Indian culture and undertake outreach activities in Busan and southern parts of Korea.
- The Indian Cultural Centres promotes bilateral cultural linkages between India and the Republic of Korea, by organizing cultural programmes, cultural seminars, workshops and trainings engaging India-based Gurus professionals and trainers for Yoga, Hindi, Hindustani Classical Music viz; Tabla and Indian Dances such as Kathak, Odissi; Indian cooking classes, screening of Indian movies both at its premises and at public places such as libraries, movie halls and parks, etc. The centre also organizes special lectures on diverse aspects of Indian culture by involving renowned Korean scholars and academia. Leveraging local talents on Indian culture, the centre has successfully introduced classes at its premises in addition to other Indian art forms and languages. (Indian Council for Cultural Relations)
- 2015 - 'Festival of India in Korea – SARANG' is being celebrated every year, and now it has become a significant annual cultural festival of Korea. Through SARANG, SVCC introduces diverse Indian arts forms such as dance, music, yoga, Indian films, cuisine, arts and academic works for a ten-day period in different parts of South Korea in association with local hosts and organizations.
- 2012 - The Korean Cultural Centre in New Delhi, India was founded. It is dedicated to providing insights into the rich cultural heritage of Korea. The Centre organizes various workshops and training events, exhibitions, seminars, film screenings,

Korean language classes, taekwondo classes, along with an annual Kpop Contest all over India. It also works on the School Program which is a special project for students in India to introduce Korea and Korean culture through diverse programs since 2013. (Korean Cultural Center)

- 13 – 14 April 2019 – Korea Festival was held at Mumbai.
- Each year since 2016, an all India K-POP Contest is held in more than 15 cities of India. Regional rounds of these contests are held in these cities, and then the final round is held in New Delhi. Hundreds of Indian kpop fans participate in this contest, and the winners get to visit South Korea.
- In collaboration with Kpop High India, Pink Box Events, Kiwa India, Indo Korean Culture Group, etc, various Korean Cultural Festivals and Kpop Concerts of famous Korean artists such as KARD, LUCENTE, MONT, IN2IT, VAV, Alexa, Dabit, Yubin, Han Byul, and SNUPER were organized.
- Hallyu (Korean) wave has been spreading very widely in India. Fanbases of various kdrama actors and actresses, kpop groups, and Korean artists have been expressing their presence prominently through social networking sites, and by buying official albums and merchandises directly from South Korea.

4.8 Institutional Relations

- The Department of Hindi at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS) was established in 1972, and the Department of Indian Studies (Global Campus) in 1984. The two departments which annually admit 30 and 26 students respectively, play a leading role in Hindi and Indian Studies in SK.
- April 1981 - The Tagore Society of Korea was established to promote the ideals that Rabindranath Tagore stood for. The Society comprises poets, writers, artists and scholars devoted to the exchange and study of culture and the arts between India and Korea. It publishes annual volumes on Korean-Indian Literature and Korean-Indian Culture written by both Indian and Korean scholars.
- 1991 - The Korean Society for Indian Studies Inc. (KSIS) was established with the aim to "conduct academic research on the region of India and South Asia, as well as, current events in the area; to disseminate the results to the Korean public and academia; and contribute to cultural exchange between South Korea and India.
- August 2009 – MoU was signed between Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, for the establishment of Indian Chair on Indian Economics in Hankuk University of Foreign Studies.
- 2010 - The Indo-Korea Science and Technology Centre was established in Bengaluru as a collaboration between the Indian Institute of Science and the Korea Institute of Science and Technology (The Hindu, 2019)
- July 2011 – A MoU was signed for reciprocal visits of journalists and media representatives to each other's country.
- March 2012 – A MoU of understanding was signed between the FSI and Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA). Ten IFS probationers from 2011 visited ROK in 2012, and interacted with KNDA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

- 24 July 2013 - Korea-India Association (KOINA) is the Korean counterpart of the India Korea Amity Association (IKAA). It was formed with the objective of undertaking volunteer activities in the areas of public health and medicine, promotion of trade (especially SMEs), consultation in infrastructure and environment, supporting human networks as well as the exchange of knowledge and information in diverse subjects.
- 3 December 2013 – The Institute for Indian Studies Korea was established at Korean International Trade Association, aiming to foster an in-depth understanding between India and South Korea in various fields, such as business management, economy, society, culture, law and politics.
- January 2014 – A letter of engagement between Banaras Hindu University and Tongmyong University, Busan has been signed.
- Jawaharlal Nehru University has signed MoUs of cooperation with South Korean universities such as Yonsei University, Korea University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and Busan University.
- Delhi University has signed a MoU with Korea University.
- Busan University has also established an Indian Studies Department.
- Seoul National University has established a new Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations, which offers major course on Indian Studies.
- Various South Korean universities offer degree courses in the Indian Philosophy, Yoga and Ayurveda.
- A MoU on educational exchanges has been signed between Tongmyong University, Busan, and Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, and Amity University.
- Jawaharlal Nehru University and Delhi University offer courses in Korean Studies and Korean language respectively.
- Madras University has established a Department of Korean Studies.
- Central University of Jharkhand offers a five-year integrated postgraduation degree in Korean language.
- Manipur University and Madras Christian College offer Diploma courses in Korean language.
- India-Korea Dialogue is jointly organized by Seoul Forum for International Affairs and Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, to make recommendations on policies and practical measures to strengthen the bilateral partnerships between the two governments.
- MoU is signed between Korean Advanced Institute for Science and Technology and Indian Institutes of Management (IIM), Indian School of Business (ISB), and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). Student exchange programs are carried out between these institutes.
- ‘India Advanced Management Programme’ is organized by India Fortune, for Members of Parliament, senior South Korean officials, and CEOs covering Indian economy, corporate environment and Indian culture.
- An institutional partnership is established between Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, and Korea Development Institute School of Public Policy and Management.

- Exchange of youth delegations – Through the Indian Ministry of Youth Affairs and South Korean Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, annual exchanges of youth delegations take place.
- The Government of India offers scholarships and fellowships to meritorious Korean nationals to study in recognized Indian universities and educational institutes.
- Ayush Scholarship Scheme offers courses in Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Yoga and Homeopathy.
- Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra offers courses in Hindi language.
- ROK Government Scholarship – The government of South Korea offers scholarships to Indian nationals to study Korean language and literature at Masters and PhD levels at selected Korean universities. (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2014)
- The Indian Art Museum houses articles and artifacts related to everyday life in India, religion and culture, collected from across the country by Padma Shree Dr. Kim Yang-shik. The museum has a permanent exhibition room, a temporary exhibition room and a children’s room for activity-based learning about India. (Embassy of India, Seoul, Republic of Korea)

Indian Community in South Korea.

- Around 12,000 Indian nationals are currently living in ROK which includes nearly 300 PIOs.
- A large number of Indian scholars are pursuing post-graduate and Ph.D. programmes, mostly in pure sciences, in South Korea.
- Indian professionals working in the IT, shipping and automobile sectors have immigrated to South Korea. These professionals mostly work with companies like Samsung, LG, Hyundai, TATA Daewoo, and Tata Consultancy Services.
- The Indian Embassy in South Korea has brought various Indian Associations in ROK onto a common platform as a part of a Coordination Committee, for closer coordination of Indians.
- Various associations of expatriate Indians living in ROK such as Annapurna Indian Women’s Association, Indians in Korea, Indian Student Association in Korea, Indian Merchants’ Association, etc are present.
- The Indian Embassy, Coordination Committee, and these associations organize various cultural and social events including Diwali and Holi celebrations, to socialize with other Indian members and to stay in touch with the Indian culture. (2020)

5 India’s Act East Policy

The Act East Policy (AEP) was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the East Asia Summit in Myanmar in November 2014. A similar foreign policy named ‘Look East Policy’ was launched in 1992 by the then Prime Minister Narsimha Rao. But due to the tensed strategic environment between countries and deteriorating condition of the Indian economy, LEP failed to function as required.

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Through AEP, India is focused on developing multi-dimensional relations with East Asian Countries including the ASEAN countries, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Pacific island countries, etc. It is promoting the formation of economic, political, cultural, security, and strategic relations. The geographic, economic and security issues (also including maritime conflicts, terrorism and cyber-attacks), faced by these Asian countries is similar to the issues faced by India. Hence, the Government of India is trying to establish strategic relations with these countries and regional organizations so that they all can collectively work and solve these issues. The dynamicity of these relations has helped the member countries to develop and prosper. India's one of the main motives is maintaining peace between the countries and in the Asia-Pacific region.

The north-eastern states of India lead a gateway to the South-east Asian countries. Thus, geo-centric projects are established between the neighbouring countries, for example, the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway, the Kaladan project (which will connect the ports of Kolkata and Sittwe in Myanmar), and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). India is actively promoting the connectivity with ASEAN countries. Also, since the implementation of AEP, the Indian officials have created and developed strategic diplomatic relations with countries that were earlier not having active relations with India. These state visits by the PM, President, Vice President, and government's delegations have strengthen the new as well as the existing ties.

PM Modi defines India's vision in the East Asian region as 'SAGAR' meaning Security and Growth for All in the Region. India is concerned about China's assertive rise as a dominant military power in the territorial region as well as in the India-Pacific region. Which relatively creates threats to the maritime trade and security to the countries in that region.

India-Japan relations and cooperation are at its highest level, with collaborative function on various developmental projects. Now, India is emphasizing on enhancing better relations with South Korea, which is one of the important countries in the Asia-Pacific region. PM Modi and President Moon have agreed to establish tripartite partnership with Afghanistan. The collective impact of South Korea's 'New Southern Policy', Japan's 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific', and India's 'Act East Policy' creates a synergic effect.

6 South Korea's New Southern Policy

The President Moon Jae In's government is focussed on developing more consolidated partnership with neighbouring countries through its New Northern Policy (NNP) and New Southern Policy (NSP). The NNP intends to build stronger economic linkages with countries to Korea's north, including Russia, Mongolia and Central Asian countries, along with the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform (NAPCP). The NSP, meanwhile, focuses on countries to Korea's south in Southeast Asia and India. The two regional initiatives, as pillars of economic prosperity, are linked to the 'Peaceful Korean Peninsula' and to the 'New Economic Map' of Korean Peninsula. This new policy orientation is being pursued under the government's broader strategy of

promoting a ‘Northeast Asia Plus Community for Responsibility-sharing’ (NEAPC). (The Asan Institute for Policy Studies, 2019)

The NSP aims to develop its relations with ASEAN and India as key partners in the southern region, and to raise this partnership to the level of South Korea’s traditional four major diplomatic partners (USA, China, Japan, Russia). It stresses on developing values that can be empathized with others, and to build a mutually prosperous “people-centred” community. The NSP emphasizes on “3-P Community” including the community of people, prosperity, and peace. (Thi20) The South Korean government has established the Presidential Committee on the NSP for policy recommendation and coordination, along with the creation of ASEAN Bureau in its Foreign Affairs Ministry.

The US – China trade conflict is causing economic loss to the South Korean economy, as both USA and China are its major export destinations, along with presence of various South Korean companies in China is increasing tensions between these countries. Whereas this trade conflict is providing South Korea with an opportunity to develop its technology, and to increase manufacturing of its products in collaboration with the Indian and ASEAN partners, so that these products will be able to replace the Chinese products which are hugely available in the markets across the world. Also, India and South Korea have set a target of bilateral trade of USD 50 billion by 2030 and have concluded multi-billion dollars agreements in various different sectors. Thus, it can be said that the NSP does not merely aim to replace the U.S and China with new southern regions, but rather to expand its scope of cooperation while maintaining relations with the U.S and China.

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