

Indian Strategic Influence in Afghanistan: Realist Ends through Social Means

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ABSTRACT

This era is witnessing rising India as a major power in the regional and global affairs. Since 9/11 India is strategically involved in Afghanistan in order to attain her broader agenda and realists' ends. India is pursuing her security, political, economic and social objectives in Afghanistan to strengthen her regional hegemonic influence under her smart power. This paper is exploring Indian hegemonic design and the level of Indian concentration and influence in Afghanistan via social means; it also gives comprehensive details about Indian objectives and activities, and what implications are drawn for Pakistan.

Key Words: **Hegemony, Strategic Encirclement, Indian Objectives in Afghanistan, Rising India, Regional Power.**

Introduction

In the last decade, India observed obvious military strength and economic growth, which led her integration with the global market. Indian foreign policy is also dominated by commercial and trade objectives. Due to her growing economy and political stability India perceives herself as an extra regional power and aspiring to become global power. 'A new factor is shaping India's global policies: its ambition to be recognized as world power'(Alavi, 2002). Shanmugasunaram discussing Indian hegemonic designs in South Asia(Shanmugasundaram, 2012), that rising powers have emerged as system challengers or new norm builders in world politics, their objective is to establish their hegemonic position in their respective region. Under such circumstances India is wishful for a greater role in South Asia. Cohen believes that India's added prosperity would allow adding teeth to her foreign policy(Cohen, 2000).

India is pursuing proactive cooperation within the region to win the support of other states. She is using power as the ability to influence, so others accept her legitimacy and lead and willingly support her putative leadership in the region. She is using bilateral and multi-lateral mechanisms to shape relations based on her material interests that ultimately will build her hegemonic discourse at the global level. India reflected a massive change under the I.K. Gojral doctrine, believed that she could not attain a global position without solving her regional conflicts. Besides her efforts, India is moving along some limitations as a power, due to her 'disproportionate capability relative to its neighbours, which include internal conflicts, instability in neighbours, and the on-going rivalry with Pakistan'(Mitchell, 2014). Indian clash with Pakistan and the Kashmir issue

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brought a massive damage to her soft image, 'India's relationship with its neighbours, especially Pakistan, will be the most important factor in determining whether it emerges as a great Asian power'(Cohen, 2000). Secondly, according to Pant(Pant H.V, 2010) 'Afghanistan is a litmus test for India's ascendance as regional and global power', he further says, India's role in Afghanistan will determine her global power validity.

India is heading with better and constructive relations with her neighbours. This paper is catering India's political maneuver and influence in Afghanistan through her smart power, to attain her long-run objectives in South Asia. She is politically perusing her realist interests via social means in Afghanistan without sense of altruism. India's foreign policy reflects her offensive mode through her proactive policy vis-à-vis Pakistan's defensive policy.(Xinbo, 2016)

Indian regional hegemonic intentions in South Asia

In post 9/11, the region substantially moved with the same security threats and enmity between major stakeholders, but with obvious radical transformation especially in Afghanistan, which eventually was followed by Pakistan. Whereas India is seen as a rising power in the region, with proactive horizontal and vertical strategy to enhance her role as a regional power among the peripheral states of South Asia. As Hilali believes that 'while other states may resist, India is destined to play the dominant role in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.....and destined to be not only regional hegemon but a global power as well'(Hilali, 2001).

Post-independence, India was not in a position to accumulate hegemonic policy in the region, thus, Indian, foreign policy lacked 'grand strategy', which hindered her from being a major power player in the region. According to Shanmugasunaram, historically Indian foreign policy reflected 'strategic autonomy' and prevented any foreign power from entering the region. Since 1990, change has been felt in the strategic security mapping of India under the I.K. Gojral's doctrine. Indian foreign policy has been changed from defensive to proactive. India appeared willing to sort unilateral concessions in bilateral conflicts and economic cooperation that led to security cooperation and influence in the region. Rationally, in post-Taliban regime, she is pursuing her hegemonic interests through cooperation in the region. According to Fair(Fair, 2010) India is pursuing number of her strategic interests in the region, 'first, and foremost, it seeks to be the preeminent power within the Indian Ocean basin. Second, New Delhi believes that it has a natural role in shaping regional security arrangements to foster stability throughout the Indian Ocean basin. Third, India is willing to be proactive to prevent developments that are fundamentally inimical to its interests'.

The opted proactive strategy of India does not mean preemptions; it rather promotes Indian smart power, and economic and political role model to enhance her hegemony and influence in the region. The Indian influence in Afghanistan is supporting the process of hegemony in the region, 'neither Iran nor India has any

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interest in expanding into what might called the Af-Pak area', both states have their strategic interests and maintain back to back traditions of cooperation in Afghanistan.

It has been perceived that 'India as an emerging leader in South Asia is the only regional actor that possesses both incentives and capabilities to deal with the negative security externalities emanating from instability in Afghanistan and along the Afghan-Pakistan border'(Hanif, 2009). As it is mentioned by Pant (Pant H.V, 2010) Robert Gilpin has elucidated that a more wealthy and powerful state will pursue a large bundle of security and welfare goals as compared to the less wealthy and powerful state in order to gain more control over her strategic environment. India by default is qualifying the status of regional power vis-à-vis Pakistan and justifying her influence in Afghanistan as the best possible option for US after the NATO forces withdrawal from Afghanistan. Whereas, US policies are also backing Indian hegemonic designs in the region, which for sure is affecting the strategic and security interests of other actors in the region(Mushtaq & Hashmi, 2012). Thus, India is pursuing a proactive policy in the region that opened the doors for the smaller states in South Asia and especially to Afghanistan. Wagner(Wagner, 2010) asserts 'on the regional level, India has connected her development assistance with projects of democracy promotion in Afghanistan in order to meet the expectations of the Western community'. India is considered as the largest bilateral aid donor to Afghanistan and principal supporter, thus, intruding nosily in the area traditionally claimed by Pakistan(Wirsing, 2007).

Indian objectives in Afghanistan (Post 9/11)

According to Kasturi, anyone who wants to understand the Indian role in Afghanistan in the current scenario must realize that it is a 'careful crafted peace of diplomacy'(Kasuri, 2015). The Indian smart stance for a peaceful Afghanistan is in Indian interest, India shares the collective commitment of the international community to rebuild war-torn Afghanistan. 'Serving as a land bridge, Afghanistan would alter India's continental trade by opening routes to Central Asia and Iran – going beyond Russia and China, and circumventing Pakistan'(Gross, 2014). India believes that Afghanistan will face massive challenges in post NATO forces withdrawal and dynamics are likely to be messy and unpleasant(Hyman, CSIS Hills Program on Governance, & Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, 2014), the situation can also enable Islamabad to dominant Afghanistan's political mapping(Maley, 2012). India deems Afghanistan will not be able to sustain at her own, and the risky situation can bring perilous implications for India and the region. According to Tiwari, India perceives that Afghanistan is currently facing serious challenges, which are as follows,

- Weak governance, powerful individuals acting individually under autonomous groups and corruption, political consolidation among the

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top governing bodies is major reason behind the political failure in Afghanistan.

- The revival of Taliban or share in political structure of government in Afghanistan is the biggest threat for India. India believes that Taliban has survived after the massive strikes of 14 years of International Security Afghan Forces (ISAF), and has the capacity of reemergence as a strong candidate in the political structure of Kabul.
- An economic upheaval is another challenge for the government in Kabul that further intensifies the situation of the war-torn state.
- Drug trafficking and opium production is one of the major contributing factors in Afghanistan's socio-economic turmoil. 'Afghanistan today is producing over 80 percent of the world's illicit opium, undermining good governance and public health, subverting the legal economy, fuelling corruption and insecurity, and putting money in the hands of the Taliban'(Tiwari, 2015).
- Women empowerment and human rights violation.

Hanauer and Chalk discuss Indian objectives in Afghanistan according to India's careful assessment of her regional and global interest-oriented policies in post 9/11. Indian interest is to curtail Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan as one of her main objectives but India is also pursuing her broad range of interests that go beyond simply obstructing her traditional rival state(Hanauer & Chalk, 2012). India is exploring her possible workable options in Afghanistan, as a smart power, her ascendance will definitely change the status quo and establish new arrangements according to her security dynamics and concerns. India's presence in Afghanistan reflects her needs to enhanced security by increasing her presence and control over the external environment in Afghanistan, 'in many ways, Afghanistan has become emblematic of such an ambitious course that India seems to be charting in its foreign policy'(Pant H.V, 2010). D'Souza in his write up mentions that Indian objectives are following three broad categories, security concerns, economic interests and the regional aspirations (D'Souza, National University of Singapore, & Institute of South Asian Studies, 2011). He further asserts in order to achieve the above-mentioned interests; India is displaying her soft power in Afghanistan. Thus, India is pursuing her interests in Afghanistan under the obvious social involvement, in order to attain her broader realist objectives and bypass Pakistan's claim of 'strategic encirclement'.

Indian activities in Afghanistan

India's activities in Afghanistan are based on fostering human capital, improved security and building physical infrastructure to enhance the long-term Afghan capabilities and her interest-oriented objectives. India is considered as the major stakeholder of Afghanistan's security and socio-economic development in post 9/11. According to India, her developmental measures are more inclined towards her soft power strategy and people-centric approach. She is also fostering regional

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trade cooperation, and working on several infrastructural mega projects in Afghanistan, to link India to Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics via Iran. According to Upadhyay and Zafar (Upadhyay & Zafar, 2013) India is largest regional donor in Afghanistan, she is pledging around US \$ 2 billion for reconstruction and development of the war-torn state. 'These encompass education, medical services, transport, telecommunication, civil aviation, agriculture, irrigation, power generation, industry, and rural development. India is building in Afghanistan structures from public toilets to transmission lines. A strong political relationship underwrites this partnership' (*India and Afghanistan A Developmental Partnership*, n.d.).

Indian security objectives in Afghanistan

Indian security concerns vis-à-vis Pakistan

India and Pakistan are stuck in the classical security dilemma; both have their security concerns in Afghanistan. Any step taken by any one of them is considered a security threat in Afghanistan, causing overall regional security deterioration (Pant H.V, 2010). 'India's interests in Afghanistan need to be viewed in the security paradigm, in the context of India's concerns of terror emanating from the extremely volatile Pakistan-Afghanistan border spilling into India' (D'Souza et al., 2011). India perceives her engagement in Afghanistan is vital to her regional security vis-à-vis Pakistan; her policy response in Afghanistan at large depicts India's emanating security concerns from Pakistan. India argues that Pakistan is not the solution for Afghanistan rather it is the part of the issue. India's proactive policy in Afghanistan is trying to prevent Pakistan's foothold, minimizing her religious and extremist impact, and pre-empting the return of Taliban in Afghanistan.

Besides that India requires security for Indian aid workers in Afghanistan, currently, India is perusing several development projects and many Indians are working in different sectors as in education, building infrastructure and advisers etc. India is very concerned about the personal security of the Indian workers in Afghanistan. Therefore, India with Afghanistan's permission sent her paramilitary forces, which are about 200 Indian-Tibetan Border Police commandos to guard Indian workers in Afghanistan, but does not take part in any military activity.

Ending religious extremism and terrorism

India's one of the main objectives that Afghanistan's soil is not used for anti-Indian interests or becomes base for Pakistani-sponsored extremists' militancy, which can instigate the freedom movement in Kashmir valley. Therefore, India's main security concern is to control the Islamic extremism in Afghanistan. Islamic extremism is threatening the social fabric of India it coexists with a burgeoning Hindu extremism that may lay serious implication on the multi ethno-religious

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groups in India, which aspires to re-craft a Hindu nation out of secular India. 'Islamist terrorism in India and the region provides grist for the mill of Hindu nationalism and its violent offshoots'(Fair, 2010). India considers herself a victim of Islamic extremism and radicalization, due to the enhanced role of Islamic networking in Kashmir and across India, and cross border terrorism.

Therefore, it is vital for India that religious extremism and terrorism [Taliban], should not be allowed to re-emerge in Afghanistan. India is focusing on the soft targets as to suppress the Islamic extremist dominating strokes. On the other side, it is essential for Pakistan to support a religious client regime in Afghanistan to mount the pressure on India for Kashmir resolution. According to Brajesh Mishra, the Indian Former National Security Adviser, 'India will be one of the biggest losers if Talibanization grips Afghanistan and extremism spreads through Pakistan.'(Brajesh, 2010)

Security and military training

India and Pakistan both offered Afghanistan, training of security forces and military-to-military confidence building measures. However, under the 2011 India-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership (IASP), India will provide training to the Afghan security forces to fill the gap by Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) after the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan. According to Kanwal and Ghosh, 'around 100 Afghan defense personnel are trained at different Indian military academies every year and India has also posted its army officers to Afghanistan to teach basic military field craft and English skills to ANSF'(Kanwal & Ghosh, 2012). According to Menon and Kumar, India's best contribution in security training of Afghan recruits can be turned to 30000 recruits per year(Menon & Kumar, 2010). Under (IASP) agreement, besides military training, India will also provide military equipment to Afghanistan. According to an analysis, 'India has provided \$ 8 million worth of high-altitude warfare equipment to Afghanistan, shard high-ranking military advisers and helicopter technicians from its clandestine foreign intelligence and counter-espionage organization, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)'(Ganguly, 2012). India has been involved in different military and security training of the Afghan personnel but did not express any ground level cooperation or troop's deployment in Afghanistan.

Under the Pugwas Project on South Asia Dialogue in Dubai, India asked for joint NATO-India-Pakistan cooperation after US withdrawal in Afghanistan, which is extremely unrealistic due to the trust deficit between India and Pakistan. It also reflects India's interests in sharing her presence with Pakistan in Afghanistan. Pakistan's presence is unavoidable in Afghanistan due to the porous border, Pushtun settlements on both sides of the border, cultural, ideological and religious similarities between both states, whereas Indian presence is calculated penetration to achieve her broader national objectives and security interests.

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Moreover, India is extending her security apparatus to Central Asia; she is the fourth country that possesses a military base in Central Asia after Russia, US, and Germany. In 2007 India has spent US \$ 10 million to complete the refurbishment of Ayni military base in Tajikistan. According to Sudha Ramachandan, ‘A base at Ayni allows India rapid response to any emerging threat from the volatile Afghanistan-Pakistan arc.....It also gives New Delhi a limited but significant capability to inject special forces into hostile theatres as and when the situation demands’(Ashraf, 2009).

Indian security and military training in Afghanistan

No	Project	Year	No
1.	Training Afghan Army officers	Annually	More than 1000
2.	Training Afghan police	Annually	More than 1000

Indian political objectives in Afghanistan

Support to democratic trends in Afghanistan

India has been very active in the political process of Afghanistan. India actively supported Karzai administration in Afghanistan, and emphasized that Afghans themselves should lead the Afghan political process. India is following layered political support to ensure the multiethnic political participation, to balance the long supported Northern Alliance and to minimize the Pushtun dominance in Afghanistan’s political structure. India asserts that the political structure should be based on the reconciliation program among the different power stakeholders in Afghanistan. On the other side, India is against Taliban ascendance to power or power sharing, which may enable Pakistan to resume her dominance in Afghan politics.

India is assisting Afghanistan in democratic state building process by institutional training in India’s Bureau of Parliamentary Study and Training, improving local governance, exchange visits of parliamentarians and election commission members, and infrastructural development; she also contributed with building of new Parliament in Kabul.

Establishing diplomatic ties

Since Taliban’s demise, India has established substantial diplomatic presence in Afghanistan. Besides, Indian Embassy in Kabul, India opened her consulates in Afghanistan, initially in Kandahar and Jalalabad and later in Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. These diplomatic centers facilitated both states in building their relationship on people to people level that enhanced India’s grass root level

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understanding in different sectors as trade, investment, awareness, and local politics.

Expanding regional influence

Another perspective that supports India's enhanced role in Afghanistan is her attempt to carve out her greater presence and influence in the regional affairs. India's pro-active strategy and significant economic power projection in the region is backed by US vis-à-vis China. Indian role in Afghanistan reveals her quest for larger role in regional and global affairs. 'The focus in Washington on shared values in the relationship associated with liberal constitutional democracy may offer India a wider canvas on which to sketch its global aims, for developing influence and projecting power on a global scale'(Malone & Mukherjee, 2010).

India to Afghanistan via chabahar port [Iran]

India cannot access the Central Asian Republics (CARs) via Af-Pak region due to mutual distrust between India and Pakistan; therefore, Iran became strategically very important in India's policy towards Afghanistan to access the CARs. India planned her transit route from Chabahar [Iran] to CARs while bypassing Pakistan that added more fear and anxiety to Pakistan. India developed the Chabahar port in southeastern Iran and committed \$ 100 million for its up-gradation to access Afghanistan's ring road through the 606 Highway from Zaranj to Delaram. On the other side Iran and Afghanistan possess good relations, Iran is considered a significant contributor, trading partner and donor in Afghanistan's reconstruction and development process.(Peabody, 2009)

Pakistan and Iran's uneasy relations facilitated Indian interests in Afghanistan. Pakistan blames Iranian *Shia* militants operations in Baluchistan, Iran is also supporting the *Shia* minority in Afghanistan. According to Carter Iran's strategic interests in Afghanistan are to deepen her influence in Afghanistan, trade and investment interests, to resolve Afghan refugees' problems, to stop drug trafficking, to reduce Sunni militancy against the *Shia*, and lastly, Iran's concerns about the US presence on her eastern border(Carter, 2010). In 2002, Tehran and Kabul signed a bilateral Trade and Transit agreement that facilitated in creating the Chabahar Free Zone Authority (CFZA). In 2012, a tripartite agreement was concluded between Afghanistan, India and Iran to boost transit trade through Chabahar to Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics. 'Today, Afghan-Iranian Trade cooperation is exacerbating Pakistan's fears of growing Indian influence in the region, because Iran and India have collaborated on trade access in Afghanistan and have plans to expand in Central Asia'(Hameed, 2012).

On the other side as a counter strategy under the Pakistan-China collaboration, Pakistan built the Gawadar port. Gawadar [deep-water] port is along the Makran coast in Baluchistan, which is considered the shortest route from Arabian Sea to CARs. 'The project will enable Beijing to gain considerable influence in the

region, giving it a strategic entrance to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean'(Azeemi, 2007). Besides that, the port will also strengthen Pakistan's position in the Indian Ocean vis-à-vis India, and it will open the trade routes for Afghanistan.

Indian economic objectives in Afghanistan

Economic diplomacy

The era has witnessed the revival of Afghanistan's geo-economic position, despite the fact that Afghanistan is a war-torn state and currently functioning under a weak political structure, but strategically very important due to her central approach to a wider regional cooperation and also a state with rich natural resources. India is facilitating Afghanistan with the trade and commercial line to stabilize her economic frontage to support her broader agenda of economic diplomacy. Indian economic diplomatic policy in Afghanistan reveals her craving to fill the vacuum after the future withdrawal of ISAF forces from Afghanistan in order to achieve her broader interest-oriented objectives in the region. During Karzai's era Afghanistan supported Indian economic policies. Indian initiatives have promoted Karzai's administrative legitimacy and good governance.

Access to central Asian republics and Afghanistan's energy resources

Central Asia witnessed emergence of several Islamic states. Central Asian Republics has become the focus of many global and regional powers after the Soviet disintegration in 1991, due to the presence of untapped energy resources and large markets. They are also considered as the backyard of Russia and China, which makes them strategically very important to US and India. Whereas, Afghanistan's current situation and her important strategic position makes her the most fragile and possible pass to access the CARs. India is competing with US, China and Russia to access the CARs and pursue her political influence in the region.

Whereas, India and Pakistan contested for their strategic presence in Central Asia via Afghanistan, in the decade of 1990s Pakistan believed that it is a natural advantage to build economic ties between her as an Islamic Republic and the Muslim CARs. During the tenure of Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan stressed on developing economic routes via Afghanistan to the CARs. According to Christine Fair that in the same decade, Pakistan also developed a source of Islamic militancy that pushed the newly born CARs towards the anti-militancy or anti-Talibanization alliance with Russia, Iran and India. Fortunately, India appeared as the most suitable ally in South Asia that focused on persistent anti-Taliban policy in the region. Both India and Pakistan have their energy interests in the Central Asian Republics due to their enhanced energy requirement and growing economies. According to Hanauer and Chalk India's economy is growing more than 7 % annually, since 1997 India became world's second fastest growing energy market,

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and estimated that by 2030 India would need to import more than 80 % of her fuel requirements(Hanauer & Chalk, 2012).

a. Silk Route

Afghanistan's history reveals her geo-economic and strategic importance. She has been considered the only route to invade India from north to south, and the traditional trading route from Central Asia, to South Asia and Middle East. The historical economic land bridge and network of series of travelling routes the 'Silk Road' [named for Chinese silk traders in the Han Dynasty '206 BC to 220 AD'], 'where philosophies, religions, ideas, goods, and even the bubonic plague spread across cultures'.(Anne, 2012) The New Silk Road is the new initiative to connect South Asia to the resourceful CARs. Afghanistan's strategic location can facilitate and play an important role in gaining accesses to the natural gas of CARs.

However, Afghanistan is developing the Silk Road Initiative (SRI) to revive her old traditional status of transit route of trading, connecting South Asia, Central Asia and Middle East. In 2011, US has begun the development of the New Silk Road Initiatives (NSRI), focusing on both sides of the project the 'hardware' and the 'software', building infrastructure, highways, roads, rail tracks, pipelines, and reducing trade barriers and custom duties.

b. Turkmenistan – Afghanistan – Pakistan – India (TAPI) Pipeline

Turkmenistan – Afghanistan – Pakistan – India (TAPI) pipeline project is already under consideration among the mentioned states. During the Taliban regime in 1990s, India was not part of this project, and it was Turkmenistan – Afghanistan – Pakistan (TAP), later, in 2008 after the fall of Taliban, Delhi became part of this agreement and the project was renamed as TAPI. While, US supports the TAPI project verses the proposed Iran – Pakistan – India (IPI) pipeline, on the other side IPI project has been supported by Russia. The purposed TAPI project is '1,680-kilometer pipeline will stretch from Turkmenistan through Herat and Kandahar in Afghanistan, Multan and Quetta in Pakistan, and Fazilka on the Indian-Pakistan border'(Hameed, 2012). In other sources the length of TAPI has been mentioned as 1,700-kilometer costing US \$ 7.6 billion, it would carry 33 billion cubic meters of Turkmen gas on annual busses, and it will generate approximately \$ 1.4 billion annually transit fees for Afghanistan. India and Pakistan will receive 14 bcm per year. India is viewing Afghanistan as gateway to CARs, and aspiring for stability and security to implement TAPI.

Energy and mineral resources

India has invested in several projects and areas as mining, infrastructure, telecommunications, agro-based, small scales industries, health, pharmaceuticals,

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education, and information technology(Price, 2013). Besides that, India is investing in Afghanistan's natural resources, accessing minerals and exploring greater economic opportunities with Afghanistan.

'It is estimated that Afghanistan has mineral wealth of more than US \$ 3 trillion, including huge reserves of oil, gas, copper, iron, gold etc. The iron ore deposits are worth US \$ 421 billion; copper deposits about US \$ 274 billion and gold deposits are worth US \$ 25 billion. Besides, the country has 36.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 3.6 billion barrels reserves of oil'(Upadhyay & Zafar, 2013).

Industry, commerce and trade

Afghanistan is a land locked state and shares no border with India; therefore, Afghanistan is highly dependent on Pakistan for trading and sea routes. In the past, Pakistan several times closed the transit trading of Afghanistan due to the political upheaval on the issue of Pushtunistan that forced Afghanistan to revise her strategy on Pushtunistan vis-à-vis her economic needs. In 2003, a preferential trade agreement has been signed by India and Afghanistan, which reduced the duties on Afghan exports. The total trade between India and Afghanistan enhanced from \$80 million in 2001 to \$280 million in 2010. India is Afghanistan's fifth largest source of imports and 20 percent of Afghan's goods are exported to India. By 2012 Afghanistan's one – quarter exports are sent to Indian markets.

Pakistan allows exports from Afghanistan to India, about 38 items that has been given 100% tariff concessions to Afghanistan from India, under the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) 2010. Whereas Pakistan closed her borders for Indian goods' export to Afghanistan, that pushed India to explore another route via Iran to Afghanistan. The main obvious reason behind Pakistan's refusal is that it may lessen Pakistan's exports, which is around \$ 1.2 billion annually to Afghanistan. Afghanistan is Pakistan's second largest export market, in which India may replace Pakistan if the borders for Indian goods get opened.

Indian private investment in Afghanistan

Indian government is supporting private Indian investors to invest in Afghanistan; many Indian private companies are entering in the Afghan markets and targeting many sectors as agriculture, manufacturing, mining and telecommunication. Since 2011, around 100 Indian companies are investing in Afghanistan's different sectors, 43% in services, 41 % in construction, and 16% in industries. The Afghan-Indian firms have been established around 80 joint ventures with the total initial capital of \$ 20 million(Price, 2013).

Physical and infrastructural development in Afghanistan

Infrastructural development and road construction

India's one of the largest investment is the Zaranj-Delaram strategic road [highway in South-Western Afghanistan], which was inaugurated in January 2009. It will link the seaports of Iran to Afghanistan, facilitating Indian access to the CARs via Afghanistan. The road is 280 kilometer from the town of Delaram in Heart province to Zaranj town on the Afghanistan-Iran border, while, the Indian Border Road Organization (BRO) have connected the main highways [Heart-Kandahar] in Afghanistan to Chabahar. The highway is considered as a symbol of Indian commitment to Afghanistan, India also claims that the completion of the project engulfed many precious lives, 11 Indians and 129 Afghan lives. To ensure the safety of the Indian workers, the project has been completed with help of Indian Army.

In addition to Zaranj-Delaram Highway, the Indian authorities also constructed 58 km of inner city roads that included 40 km in Zaranj, 10 km in Gurguri, and 8 km connecting Gurguri to Razai, and also purposed to build Bamyan-Chabahar Railroad. Due to this heavy investment the population and the land value has been increased in Zaranj.

Infrastructural development and road construction in Afghanistan

	Project	Area	Year	Cost
1.	Construction of the new Parliament building; in addition GoI has also committed assistance for construction of Executive Block for the new Afghan Parliament building.	Kabul	2005-2015 (Inaugurated on 25 December 2015 jointly by H.E. Dr. Ashraf Ghani, and H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi).	\$ 178 million
2.	Restoring the Stor Palace	Stor	—	—
3.	Construction of Zaranj-Delaram Road (280 Kilometers strategic road). The project involved 339 Indian engineers and workers.	Zaranj-Delaram road [linking Afghanistan to Iran]	2005 to 2009	\$ 150 million
4.	Bamyan- Chabahar Railroad [the project is under consideration]	Bamyan-Chabahar	2014	—

Power and transmission

India is working on the construction of 'a 22kv double circuit transmission line from Pul-e-Khumari to Kabul, and a 220/110/20kv substation in Kabul, which involves the construction of 600 transmission towers it will supply electricity to Kabul from Timriz power project in Uzbekistan'(Ashraf, 2009).

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Salma Dam in Herat province is also constructed by India on Hari Rud River. The project has been completed in 2011; in 2004 the total estimated amount by the Indian government was around Rs 478 corer for this purpose. The dam will generate 42 MW of power and involves the erection of 110 KV power transmission lines from Salma Dam to Herat city(Ashraf, 2009). The project is constructed by the India Company [Water and Power Consultancy Services Ltd. (WAPCOS)].

Power and transmission

No.	Project	Area	Time construction /completion	Cost
1.	Power Grid Corporation, [constructing 220 kv double circuit transmission line].	From Banghlan Province [Pul-i-Khumri] to Kabul	2009	\$120 million
2.	A 220/110/20 kv substation to bring additional power from northern grid to Kabul. [Passing over the Salang Range at an altitude of 3,800 m, the transmission line is 202 km long].	Chimtala	2005 to April 2009	The project cost INR 4,050 m (approximately \$ 83 m).
3.	Construction of Salam Dam Power Project [42 MW]/ Doshi and Charikar substations.	Heart Province	2004 to 2011	\$130 million
4.	Construction of cold storage food warehouse	Kandahar	2005-2006	\$ 1.6 million
5.	Hajigak iron ore mine, a six million tones steel unit and 800 MW power station	Hajigak	From 2011	\$ 11 billion

Transport and communication

India gifted 400 buses to Afghanistan, and among 200 buses are to improve the transport situation and to connect the outlying villages to urban centres, and she is providing training to traffic operators. 205 buses out of 400 buses were deployed in Kabul and the rest in 25 provinces. India also strengthened the civilian aviation capacity of Afghanistan by providing three airbus aircrafts along with the required spares. India also has enhanced the telecommunication sector in Afghanistan with UPU, and IPU collaboration, through installation of digital telephone exchanges, towers and power supply systems. Moreover, India executed the Radio and Television Afghanistan (RTA) to link all the provinces.

Transport and Communication in Afghanistan

No.	Project	Institution/City	No/ Quantity
1.	India provided aircrafts to Afghanistan's airlines	Ariana	3
2.	Indian military vehicles	Afghan National Army	300
3.	Indian public buses for transport	Afghanistan/Kabul	Initially 400, than the number enhanced to 1000
4.	India gifted mini-buses	Afghanistan	200
5.	Utility vehicles for municipalities [including water, cesspit tankers and garbage dumpers].	Afghanistan	105
6.	Ambulances for public hospital.	Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif	10
7.	Helping in the expansion of Afghan National Television network.	In 34 provincial capitals	Completed
8.	Restoration of telecommunication infrastructure, India built Multipurpose Community Tele-Centres (MCTs)/up gradation of telephone exchanges.	In 12 provinces	Completed in 2007

Indian social objectives in Afghanistan

Humanitarian assistance

In 2002, India supported World Food Program (WFP) in new school feeding operation in Afghanistan. She purposed the conversion of one million tons wheat to high protein biscuits that can be distributed among the schoolchildren to encourage their attendance. The distribution started in 2003 and continued till date, 'every day, nearly two million Afghans school children in 33 out of 34 provinces [excluding Kabul] receive a packet each of 100 grams of biscuits' (*India and Afghanistan A Developmental Partnership*, n.d.).

Indian humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan

No.	Project	Area/Year	Quantity	Cost
1.	India providing food assistance to around 2 million primary school children [on daily bases], through School Feeding Programme administrated through the World Food Programme.	Afghanistan	100 grams (the food assistance in terms of fortified wheat biscuits equal to 500,000 tons of wheat)	\$ 321 million
2.	Gift of wheat	Afghanistan in 2009	250,000 metric tons	711,882 metric tons of wheat or equivalent in cash already delivered at a cost of Rs. 989.45 crore
3.	Commitment to supply wheat.	Afghanistan	1.1 million metric tons	

Public health and sanitation

India enhanced her medical facilities in the aftermaths of NATO attacks on Afghanistan. By the end of 2001, Indian medical teams rushed to attend the patients in Afghanistan [a team of 13 doctors and paramedics facilitated in Kabul]. India is also funding the Afghan Ministry of Health to build and maintain health clinics. Moreover, the Indira Gandhi Institute for Child Health (IGICH) hospital never been closed during to war upheaval, and kept providing health facilities to the Afghan nationals.

Public health and sanitation

No.	Project	Area	Year	No/Cost
1.	Five Indian Medical Missions (IMMS) working in different areas of Afghanistan.	Kabul, Heart, Jalalabad, Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif	Since 2001	Attending 30,000 patient monthly, nearly 360,000 annually
2.	- Renovation of the Indira Gandhi Institute for Child Health (IGICH) hospital. - Establishment of new Diagnostic Centre (completed) & construction of Decentralized Waste Water Treatment System at Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH). - Training via tele-education at ANASTU, Kandahar and Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health.	Kabul	Renovation completed in 2003, 2005 and again in 2007.	Grant-in-aid of US\$ 1 million to IGICH over next 5 years.
3.	- Camps for the provision of artificial limbs for amputees. - Fifth camp consisting of a 25-member team including doctors, (in which thousand Afghan amputees will be provided prosthetic limbs, and calipers).	Kabul	2002-2014	Under the earlier four camps, 3051 persons were provided with artificial limbs by the BMVSS.
4.	India is building basic health clinics in the border provinces.	Badakashan, Balkh, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Nuristan, Paktia and Paktika	-	-
5.	Commitment to contribute to Afghan Red Crescent Society for treatment of Afghan children with Congenital Heart Disease.	Afghanistan	214 children have already been treated under this aid till mid-March 2016	US \$ 1 million annually over next five years.
6.	Building toilet-cum-public sanitation complexes.	Kabul	-	5

Educational development

India's one of the biggest investments is in the education sector in Afghanistan, which is considered as the greatest single factor catalyzing India's transformation (*India and Afghanistan A Developmental Partnership*, n.d.). India is focusing on under and postgraduate Afghan students, by mid of 2009 the first badge of Afghans graduate studying in Indian institutes had returned to work and contribute in Afghanistan.

Educational developments

No.	Project	Area	Quantity/No	Cost
1.	Construction and rehabilitations of schools.	Afghanistan	–	\$ 321 million
2.	Construction of Habibia school. (Grant-in-aid of US \$ 1 million to Habibia High School over next 10 years).	Kabul	1 Habibia school	\$ 25 million
3.	Establishing an Afghan National Agricultural University and a Mining School.	Kandahar	1 National Agricultural University	–
4.	Sarhad, a Pune-based, NGO, funding educational sponsorships	Afghanistan	50	–
5.	Scholarships for agricultural degree. (614 ICAR scholarships under India-Afghanistan Fellowship Programme commenced in 2012-13 lasting up to 2020-21. 208 fellowships have been utilized so far).	Afghanistan	200	–
6.	Annual long-term university scholarship, The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).	Afghanistan	500 scholarships/per year	–
7.	GoI also grants ICCR scholarships to pursue under graduate courses in various Indian universities in major cities across India.	to Afghans	1000 every year	–

Capacity building and small community-based development projects

India is focusing on youth potential building and small development projects under the model of self-help group, especially among the vulnerable border districts in the southern and eastern provinces of Afghanistan. Youth in Afghanistan are around 68 % of population and mostly are under the age of 25 years. Around 84 small projects are under different phases in about 19 provinces of Afghanistan, which will engage the young Afghans in different economic activities and will provide financial support to them, which eventually will keep them away from

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extremists' ideologies, terrorism, drug addiction and organized crimes. Later Sushma Swaraj, the External Affairs Indian minister conveyed the approval of 3rd phase of 92 small development projects in Afghanistan ("India to start small development projects in Afghanistan," 2016). 'Capacity building programmes are also underway in the fields of diplomacy, media, and information, civil aviation, agriculture research and education, health care and medicinal science, tourism, education, standardization, rural development, public administration, and local governance' (*India and Afghanistan A Developmental Partnership*, n.d.).

Moreover, since 2007, Indian civil servants have been deputed in Afghan Public Departments to train and enhance the capacity of Afghan Public Administration. Afghans responded enthusiastically to the short and medium term training of the Afghan public servants. 500 ITEC slots and 25 slots under TCS Colombo plan are allocated annually to Afghanistan and specialized ITEC courses are held for Afghan Government Officials on specific demand. In addition, 500 placements are yearly offered for Afghan people under the Indian Technical and Cooperation Programme for three to six months in India. India is also offering vocational skills development programme in cooperation with the Afghan Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to train approximately one thousand Afghan youth. Besides that India is focusing on women empowerment, the project is targeting the most needy women and war widows.

Capacity building and small community-based development projects in Afghanistan

No.	Project	Area/ Targeted Population	No/ Cost
1.	Annual college scholarships and training grants.	Afghan Civil Servants	1300
2.	Annual short-term ITEC training programme in Indian technical and professional institutions of their choice.	Afghan Public Servants	500
3.	Deputation of Indian technical advisors in Afghan ministries.	Afghan Civil Servants	20
4.	Women empowerment, vocational training, 'The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)'. Bagh-e-Zanana		Over 3000 women
5.	Vocational Training Centre of carpentry, plumbing, welding, masonry and tailoring by the Confederation of Indian Industries.	Afghan youth	-
6.	Small Development Projects (SDP) scheme, in the fields of agriculture, rural development, education, health, vocational training, etc. Small Development Projects are implemented in three Phases- under I & II phase	Afghan youth	under I & II phase, the total commitment of US \$ 20 million, 132 projects at a cost of approx. US \$ 19.5 million were approved (94 projects completed)

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7.	MoU for implementation of the Third Phase of the SDP scheme was signed during President Karzai's visit to India in November 2012 with an additional outlay of US \$ 100 million.	Afghan youth	A total of 287 projects at approx. US \$ 52.5 million have been approved under Phase-III and are at various stages of implementation. 87 additional projects are under Govt's active consideration.
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People to people contact

Besides transportation and digital connectivity/communications, India laid her focus on government and minister levels exchange with Afghanistan, and prioritized people to people contact. India is working to keep away the young Afghan nation from the extremists ideological believes. The Afghans are welcoming the Indian involvement and development projects, the social and economic contact between the Indians and the ordinary Afghans has shaped pro-Indian sentiments amongst the Afghan people. Besides that the Indian films, music and television programs are extremely popular and viewable among the local Afghan populace. India remains the favorite destination for Afghan, the Indian embassy and four other mission issuing around 350 visas on daily busses(Pant H.V, 2010).

Indian cultural exchange

India promotes diversity in culture, ethnicity and religion, which is the essence of her soft power, controlling all its external negativities and vulnerabilities under the umbrella of cultural imperialism. 'When Indians voted recently in large numbers in the cynical and contrived completion to select the new seven wonders of the modern world, they voted for *Taj Mahal* constructed by a Mughal king, not for Angkor Wat, the most magnificent architect product of their own religion'(Tharoor, 2011).

Cultural exchange between India and Afghanistan is one of the Indian major focused areas in Afghanistan. India is pursuing her aid diplomacy in Afghanistan according to the Gandhian ways rather Nehruism, supporting people at local and community levels under broad socio-cultural acceptance. Moreover, Afghanistan, a multi-ethnic society is widely influenced by the Indian media and Bollywood culture, through India media Indian cultural liking has been penetrated within the Afghan society. Many Indian soap dramas have been dubbed into Dari, India has also commenced on exchange of media persons, radio and television programmes. Besides that, India has opened its cultural centre in the Indian Embassy in Kabul. India has supplied musical instruments to Afghan universities, institutes, music academies, the Afghan National Army band, and Afghan Radio and Television.

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‘India helped restore the television hardware in Jalalabad and set up a TV studio, TV transmitter, a mobile TV satellite uplink and 5 TV relay centres. In 2009, India is planning to augment its radio broadcast in Dari, Pashto and Baluch languages’ (*India and Afghanistan A Developmental Partnership*, n.d.).

Conclusion

Since the fall of Taliban, Afghanistan is the new conflict zone between India and Pakistan. Both states perceive their influence in Afghanistan critically important to achieve their national security objectives. Afghanistan is considered as the extension of Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan and a zero-sum game. ‘Ironically, while the confrontation of India and Pakistan has abated in the contested territory of Kashmir, it has expanded into a new theaters, including the Indian Heratland and, increasingly, in Afghanistan’ (Fair, 2010). Afghanistan appeared to be the new cause of disagreement between two traditional rival states. In the course of discussion, according to Hanif (Hanif, 2009), ‘Afghanistan in many ways has replaced Kashmir as the main arena of the still-unresolved struggle between Pakistan and India’.

However, India-Afghanistan good relations and India’s increased multilayered involvement in Afghanistan in post 9/11 have laid serious relational security implications for Pakistan. Delhi believes that her presence in Afghanistan is vital to her broader interest, while, Pakistan fears Indian presence on her western border and claims for strategic encirclement from India-Iran to Afghanistan area. Pakistan possesses serious security concerns against the Indian foothold in Afghanistan. Whereas the Indian circles have dissimilar opinions, as some believes that India should have her boots on ground and some perceives India’s role in Afghanistan is highly pessimistic because eventually will instigate Pakistan to continue with proxies against India from Afghanistan. Thus, domestically, India perceives Afghanistan as a mean to encircle and isolate Pakistan, to encounter the non-conventional methods of Pakistan and religious extremism, to put end to the strategic depth of Pakistan in Afghanistan or strategic encirclement of Pakistan, and to destabilize and increase insurgents movements in Baluchistan, and broadly to approach Central Asian market through Afghanistan, and finally to play her regional role and restrict China’s expansion in South and Central Asia.

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