

## **India's Foreign Policy, Balancing Independence with International Relations During 1947-1964**

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### **Abstract**

*After gaining independence in 1947, India faced challenging nation-building and a convoluted historical context shaped by the legacy of colonial rule. India and Pakistan were established as a result of extensive sectarian warfare and large migrations when British India was divided. This terrible event has left a lasting impression on the societal landscape. When India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, took office, the nation was struggling economically, politically, and religiously. The establishment of a democratic and secular state with an emphasis on social justice and economic progress was the aim of the new administration. The principles of non-alignment and the Panchsheel (Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence), which represent India's commitment to independence, sovereignty, and international cooperation, form the foundation of its foreign policy. The present paper is focused on India's Foreign Policy from 1947 to 1964 about balancing Independence with International relations.*

**Key words:** *India's Foreign Policy, International relations, etc.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

After gaining independence in 1947, India faced challenging nation-building and a convoluted historical context shaped by the legacy of colonial rule. India and Pakistan were established as a result of extensive sectarian warfare and large migrations when British India was divided. This terrible event has left a lasting impression on the societal landscape. When India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, took office, the nation was struggling economically, politically, and religiously. The establishment of a democratic and secular state with an emphasis on social justice and economic progress was the aim of the new administration. The principles of non-alignment and the Panchsheel (Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence), which represent India's commitment to independence, sovereignty, and international cooperation, form the foundation of its foreign policy. The geopolitical landscape became even more complex during the Cold War, requiring India to maintain its non-aligned stance while negotiating between the opposing blocs led by the US and the USSR. Given this, India's foreign policy from 1947 to 1964 evolved into a cautious balancing act with the goals of safeguarding the nation's independence, fostering regional stability, and advancing global peace. The historical context enabled the difficult decisions and diplomatic man oeuvres that shaped India's foreign policy throughout this crucial period.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **1. Colonial Legacy**

India's foreign policy was moulded by its experience under British colonial rule, which strengthened its adherence to values like independence, sovereignty, and anti-imperialism.

##### **i) Partition and Communal Tensions:**

The traumatic partition in 1947 and communal violence heightened the importance of maintaining stability in the region. India's foreign policy aimed to address regional tensions and foster peaceful relations with its neighbors.

##### **ii) Non-Alignment Doctrine:**

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), championed by leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, played a pivotal role. India sought to remain unaligned with any major power bloc, emphasizing neutrality and independence in international affairs.

#### **2. Alignment Policy**

India's non-alignment stance was a foundational principle of its foreign policy, and it can be explained in the following terms;

i) **Neutral Position:** Non-alignment meant that India would not align itself with any major power bloc during the Cold War. In a world divided between the United States and the Soviet Union, India asserted its independence by maintaining a neutral stance, refusing to be drawn into military alliances or ideological conflicts.

ii) **Strategic Autonomy:** India wanted to keep its strategic independence and the capacity to decide what was best for the country. India was able to pursue its foreign policy objectives independently of the limits imposed by alignment with superpower blocs thanks to its non-alignment.

iii) **Promotion of Peace:** Opposition to military alliances and a dedication to peace were the main causes of non-alignment. India promoted nonviolent cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution, placing more emphasis on communication and diplomacy than on military warfare.

### 3. Significance of Non-Alignment

i) **Preservation of Sovereignty:** Non-alignment was seen as a means to preserve India's sovereignty and avoid external interference in its internal affairs.

ii) **Facilitation of Development:** By staying non-aligned, India aimed to attract economic and technological assistance from both Western and Eastern blocs, facilitating its economic development.

### 4. Economic Diplomacy

Indeed, India faced serious economic issues after gaining independence, and the need to obtain trade agreements, investments, and economic aid did have an impact on the country's foreign policy decisions. The following are some significant ways that India's foreign policy during this time was impacted by economic factors:

i) **Economic Development :** India requested financial backing for its economic development projects from a number of nations and international organisations. Aid played a critical role in industrialisation, infrastructural development, and tackling the issues facing a newly independent economy.

ii) **Global Economic Cooperation:** India had platforms to participate in international economic cooperation with other countries thanks to multilateral organisations. India has been able to contribute to talks on international trade policies and economic challenges by participating in venues such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

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