

**INDIA AND THE QUEST FOR SOFT POWER:
AN ASSESSMENT OF SUCCESSES AND FAILURES**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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DEDICATED TO
THE UNFAILING LOVE AND SUPPORT OF
MY BELOVED MOTHER



Date: 27.07.2012

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**India and the Quest for Soft Power: An Assessment of Successes and Failures**”, submitted by me in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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CERTIFICATE

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFSPA	Armed Forces Special Powers Act
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
BBC	British broadcasting Corporation
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CBI	Country Brand Index
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
CNN	Cable News Network
CT	Culture Technology
DC	Department of Culture
DFID	Department For International Development
EC	European Commission
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
G6	Group of Six (USA, Japan, UK, Germany, France and Italy)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IBEF	India Brand Equity Forum
IBSA	India, Brazil and South Africa
ICCR	Indian Council of Cultural Relations
IDI	India Development Initiative

IFC	India Future of Change Initiative
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organisations
IIM	Indian Institute of Management
IIT	Indian institute of Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisations
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisations
IT	Information Technology
KOCCA	Korea Contents & Culture Agency
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MNC	Multinational Corporations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NBI	Nation Brand Index
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisations
NRI	Non Resident Indian
PDD	Public Diplomacy Division
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USP	Unique Selling Proposition

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Joseph Nye's concept of 'soft power' is one of the fundamental conceptual tools in foreign policy and International Relations, which directs an extensive and meaningful debate in academic and public discourse. The term not only captures the imagination of foreign policy thinkers but has now also started featuring in the speeches of politicians, policy documents of foreign ministries, and all kinds of media outlets. But the events of the last decade, the shifting dynamics of global geo-politics and soft power's rising value have become central to the contemporary discourse in international politics.

The current debate of soft power is related to the overall concept of power, and it is increasingly gaining multidimensional characteristics in the contemporary International politics. Power (i.e. the ability to influence the behaviour of others based on the capacity to reward or punish (Heywood, 1994: 150) bringing about compliance through persuasion, pressure, threats, coercion or violence) is no longer considered as a monolithic and unidimensional concept. Rather it has become multidimensional, involving dimensions of scope, domain, weight, costs, means etc. (Baldwin, 2002: 179). It is this multidimensional nature of power that makes it difficult to add up various dimensions in order to reach at some overall estimate of an actor's power. The estimate of an actor's overall power is almost always bound to be controversial because unlike hardcore economic and military power with specific indicators of its presence or strength, political power does not have any comparable standard of value in terms of its contents.

In the discussion centred on power in international relations Peter Digeser identifies mainly four faces of power and propounds that the current debate is dealing with the fourth face of power. In the first face of the power discourse, 'who' is exercising power was what mattered. The second face concerned 'what' are the issues raised and by 'whom'; the third face involved the question of 'whose' objective interests are being harmed; and the fourth face discusses 'what kind' of subject is being produced, and this precisely is the current debate on power. The fourth face precisely refers to what Joseph Nye started talking about in the 1990's as soft power (Digeser, 1992: 977-989). Thus, soft power provides a

sound apparatus to measure power in a very unconventional way by gauging the variables like ‘culture, political ideals and foreign policies’.

The notion of soft power not only presents a potent tool challenging the conventional notion of hard power (exercised through threats and coercion emanating out of a country’s military and economic might) but also supplements it by attraction and cooption through persuasive (as opposed to the coercive) dimension of power. Soft power has today become a key factor in the regulation of cordial relations amongst nations.

Image creation or ‘branding’¹ of one’s country by drawing upon its cultural attractiveness, political values and foreign policies is one of the most prominent manifestations of enhancing soft power. In fact, image cultivation and image management are not new to the realm of international relations, nations have been engaged in these practices since long (Kunczik, 1997; Szondi, 2008: 3). The core idea of nation branding is to identify the uniqueness of the country, its people, its culture or landscape to identify and draw on features that distinguish and differentiate ‘us’ from ‘them’, as opposed to public diplomacy, which often tries to identify those elements of the history, culture or people that unite, rather than separate, ‘us’. In nation branding therefore, the difference, the otherness lies in the appeal factor i.e. soft power (Gyorgy, 2008: 16). In other words, it can be said that branding takes place when a government or a private company uses its power to persuade whoever has the ability to change a nation’s image, for which it uses the tools of branding to alter the behaviour, attitudes, identity or image of a nation in a positive way (Gudjonsson, 2005: 285).

Nation branding scholars believe that countries and governments should engage in nation branding to differentiate their countries from others to gain competitive advantages (ibid, 2008: 16). The government generally is considered to be the ‘initiator and coordinator’ of creating a particular brand of the nation abroad. The role of the government in engaging with the foreign publics is very crucial. It is so important, that with any change of government domestically, there could be a direct shift in foreign policy priorities leading to the government promoting itself or its foreign policy *per se* more than the larger interests and the ‘image’ of the country (Szondi, 2008: 12). Extending this concept to India, the creation of *Brand India* is a case not only worth mentioning but also further analysis.

¹ ‘Nation Branding’ is originally and typically a British concept given by Simon Anholt and further developed by him and Wally Olins together.

Brand India is stretching its wings as a soft power today. It enjoys considerable international influence on account of its culture, values and policies. But for the creation of a favourable image that India intends to paint before the rest of the world, an analysis of the resources that India has in order to create that image becomes vital. Considering the fact that it is these resources, on the basis of which the image or 'brand' would be created, a better comprehension of these resources along with the instruments crucial for wielding soft power from them, is pertinent. It can be understood in a simple analogy that if the 'image' is a portrait then these soft power resources are the colours that make the portrait giving myriad hues to it. Hence, a better understanding of the resources that potentially furnish soft power to India and contribute in cultivating a brand as seen by the rest of the world is essential. Peter Van Ham considers this creation of a world of 'images and influences' quintessentially as a post modern concept (Ham, 2002: 255). According to him this shift from the modern political paradigm of geopolitics and power to the post modern one of images and influences has given space to the emergence of a 'brand state' (like the states as US, Canada, Britain, Latvia, Romania, Finland, Turkey, Hong Kong, Singapore and the long list includes India too).

However, Kishan S. Rana says that there has hardly been a global survey or scientific assessment of how Indians are seen by others. The extent of awareness of India varies from country to country, but some broad elements are known. In a simplified way, the image ranges between the "romantic" and the "utilitarian"- the first being that of an "Eternal India" with a prodigious centuries old rich cultural heritage, home to exquisite centre of learning for art, music, dance and folk culture; being a progenitor of religions like Christianity and Islam with Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism grown indigenously. The 'utilitarian image' however focuses on the shortcomings of India, the poverty, retrograde social practices, monstrous pollution menace and environmental damage (Rana, 2002: 107). Indian perception is so skewed abroad that in 1998 when Ogilvy and Mather carried out an 'India Brand Audit' and published a summary of the findings in a newspaper article, the findings were very surprising. It was a large and expensive effort which surveyed businessmen, journalists and others to estimate what people in various countries thought of India. The findings of the survey concluded as follows:

China: India offers more than can be seen, under extreme conditions of passion and optimism; feel curious and alienated, too strange; Blacks are always lazy; do not work effectively.

UK: a synthesis of the impossible, real and harsh, co-existence with the spiritual; A world of its own, leaves you feeling curious; the spirit of India never leaves you.

US: Restores faith in humanity; Not a country but a journey through one's own mind; Like going back to childhood, standing before a toy store; generates curiosity, rewarding.

Hong Kong & Sri Lanka: Reflected similar trend, overall Asians' popular opinion bringing more negative elements to limelight than positive. (ibid, 2002: 147)

Hence, developing on Rana's argument further, a large number of scholars also stand in agreement with him that Brand India needs to be re-engineered now. It is essential because the image affects relationships, exports of goods and services do better when the image is better, and alternatively, the acceptability of the 'Made in India' label depends partly on the image.

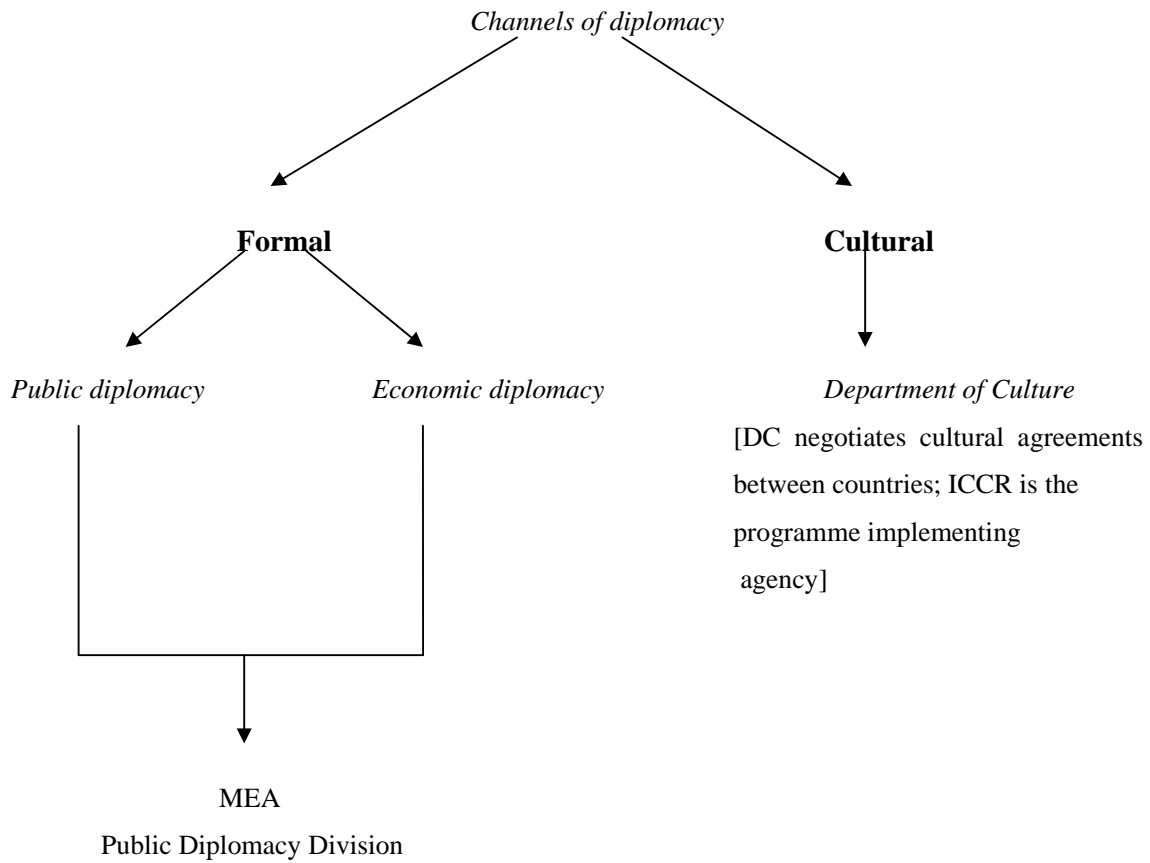
India has long been inadvertent in effective projection of its soft power resources which culminates into a positive self image abroad. But of late with the public private initiative known as the IBEF (India Brand Equity Forum) India has also jumped into the arena of 'branding' the nation and projection and promoting of an image which ultimately creates a 'receptive environment' abroad about itself for achieving policy goals and promoting national interest in the wake of it (Szondi: 2008: 6). Even Gudjonsson acknowledges indirect involvement and influence of the government in the promotion of a favourable image abroad, as is seen in the development of the IBEF as a forum to create and propagate positive palatable images of India. The 'India Everywhere' campaign during the World Economic Forum 2006 is also a demonstration of the same (Gudjonsson, 2005; Szondi, 2008: 5).

While discussing at length the various characteristics and dynamic nature of the concept of soft power in the present international relations and politics, **chapter two** deals with a multitude of definitions of soft power given by various International Relations scholars and further critiques the very concept laid down by Nye, adding few other dimensions to his concept. It discusses as to how soft power is not always confined to Nye's tripartite

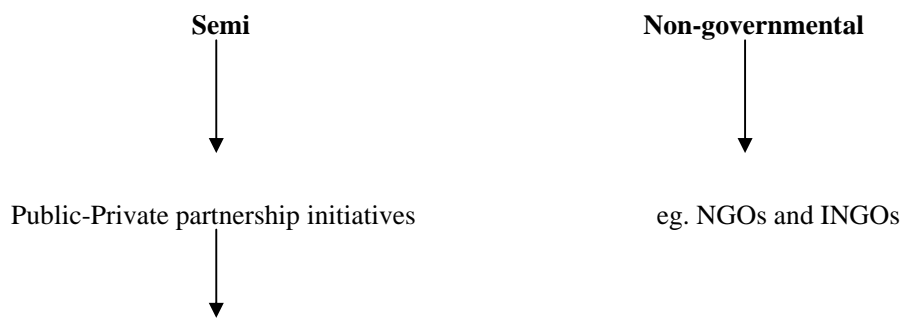
classification of soft power's resource components into 'culture, ideals and policies'. There are many other dynamics involved, including some country specific resources as well. But these structural components do not always have a positive influence in shaping the preferences of others and can at times also turn out to be counterproductive, if handled and projected inadvertently. How soft power does not always bring attraction and may sometimes lead to, as Hymans puts it 'soft vulnerability', (Hymans, 2008: 235) is also briefly addressed in the chapter.

Having looked at the conceptual details of soft power, **chapter three** tries to delineate a critical assessment of the above-mentioned issues in the Indian context. Li and Worm's inclusive and comprehensive six pillared model of soft power, would be used in the Indian context to analyse the various resources of Indian soft power. Nye's theory does not seem to be as effective and all encompassing as their extended version of the same. However, for the ease of better understanding, three of Nye's quintessential values of *culture*, *ideals* and *foreign policy*, would be taken up first (and then discussion on certain India specific resources of soft power as well such as *foreign aid* will be taken up subsequently). This would help develop a deeper understanding of the wide plethora of Indian soft power resources. After that the discussion would be directed towards deciphering the *channels of wielding soft power*- namely formal, economic and cultural diplomacies. These channels of soft power comprising of diplomacy in different forms, use various instruments for wielding soft power, and thus play a vital role in the entire gamut of international relations and international politics. Therefore, the third chapter will try to open up the debate by keeping Indian perspective in mind. Here the main goal would be to give a critical perspective related to the immense soft power potential India upholds. The chapter will further dismiss the intricacies and structural components used for wielding soft power (as Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Council of Cultural Relations etc.) in the Indian context and study whether these components facilitate or hamper India's overall goal of gaining soft power. In addition, we will also study the various institutional inadequacies related to the overall creation of 'Brand India' and see up to what extent it caters to India's aspiration in wielding soft power resources to the fullest.

I. GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS AND INSTRUMENTS OF PROVIDING SOFT POWER



II. SEMI OR NON- GOVERNMENTAL INSTRUMENTS



Eg. India Brand Equity Forum (IBEF),
Future of Change Initiative, campaigns like
'India Everywhere', 'Incredible India' etc.

After discussing at length about various dimensions of India's soft power, including an analysis of the fissures and lapses within the domestic machinery and structures (such as MEA and ICCR) that are primarily responsible for instrumentalizing the soft power resources, **chapter four** would focus on India's standing as a soft power on the international canvass, and discuss where India lies amongst various states with equally good or even better soft power credentials. The assertion that India is a 'soft power by default' (Wagner, 2010b: 334), cannot be validated without acquiring a comparative perspective on India's standing as a soft power and zero down on key areas where India lags behind and what are the lessons that it could learn from the other states.

To carry out the comparative analysis it is pertinent to analyse soft power methodologically. Soft power, from a methodological perspective, is a relative and intangible concept difficult to be quantified. The relational nature of soft power, where the perceptions of one country might vary substantially from another, makes cross-national comparisons difficult (Ernst & Young, 2012: 6). However, the likes of Jonathan McClory, a researcher in the Institute of Government (UK) and private consultant services like Ernst & Young in collaboration with the Skolkovo Institute for Emerging Market Studies have been successful in developing soft power indices of various countries only as early as 2007. Even Chicago Council of Global Affairs had come up with a soft power survey earlier in 2008 but had a limited purview since it included only major Asian countries. These surveys have been able to provide a fairly good analysis of relative soft power credentials of various countries including India.

Despite the relational nature of soft power and large number of differences on various points amongst the countries, there can still be drawn some similar attributes and qualities for which most nations share a universal understanding and appreciation. Hence, the surveys (Ernst & Young in particular) combine a wide range of indicators that capture the overall soft power capabilities across nation states (ibid, 2012: 6). Keeping these surveys at the helm of analysis, this chapter would attempt to analyse India's soft power standing in comparison to the other countries which have performed better according to the soft power indices laid down in these surveys.

So, finally the question of measurement is only a part of the soft power debate; and a great deal of future research is needed to better understand how soft power can be

leveraged to meet objectives, how soft power strategies can be evaluated, and how causal links between soft power and policy outcomes might be established. However, the question of how soft power resources are measured and accounted for is a prerequisite to effective soft power wielding strategies.

The aim of this research, therefore, is to pay attention on understanding the resources that contribute to a nation's soft power. It is an attempt to contribute to research on soft power, and remind policy makers, diplomats and analysts that prêt-a-porter soft power strategies, developed without a clear account of national soft power resources, are bound to end in failure.

Chapter 2

Conceptualizing Soft Power

Introduction

From Thucydides to the present day power has been prominent in discussions of international interactions. In other words, the concept of power is nothing recent or novel and has been inherent throughout the evolution of mankind. Yet it is essentially a contested concept which does not have any universally agreed upon definitions and has been a bone of contention amongst scholars. Its proper definition constantly remains a matter of controversy (Waltz, 1986: 333). There are disagreements not only regarding the role of power but also nature of power. In a lay person's language it is the ability to achieve the desired outcome, sometimes referred to as power *to*. It is however considered to be the exercise of control by one person over another or as power *over* (Lukes, 2005: 34). It is somehow seen as the capacity to make formal decisions which are in some way binding upon others.

International politics has always been defined in terms of influencing 'major groups in the world so as to advance the purposes of some against the opposition of others' (Wright, 1955: 130). Often, many power related terms as force, coercion, control, persuasion, influence, deterrence etc. are used synonymously with power. Robert Dahl (1957) gave an 'intuitive idea of power' the basic notion underlying which is that of A causing B to do something that B otherwise would not have done (Baldwin, 2002: 177). Steven Lukes proposed to assess power in multiple dimensions and distinguished three 'faces' or 'dimensions' of power, for example; if A gets B to do something A wants but which B would not have chosen to do, power is being exercised (Lukes, 2005: 34) In these faces of power the *first* involves the ability to influence the making of decision; *Second*, is reflected in the capacity to shape the political agenda and thus causing prevention or alteration of decision making; and *Third* dimension takes the form of controlling people's thoughts by the manipulation of their perceptions and preferences. Hobbes, conforming to the Realist school of thought, extended the concept of power to the state considering human beings as essentially power-seeking and self interested creatures. He suggested power as being the ability of an 'agent' to affect the behaviour of a 'patient' (Baldwin, 2002: 179).

Traditionally conception of international politics assumed the existence of national states having conflicting policies, side by side also placing a very high value on maintaining their independence and relying primarily on military force. The elements of national power as population, territory, wealth, armies and navies etc. were the factors that determined the power of individual states (Gulick, 1955: 24) and this came to be called as 'elements of national power' approach to power analysis. The 'power-as-resources' approach depicted power as a possession or property of states which was later challenged by the 'relational power' approach, which developed the idea of power as a type of causation (Baldwin, 2002: 178). This view holds that power is an actual or potential relationship between two or more powers (persons, states, groups etc.), rather than a property of any one of them, very unlike the traditional view. The shift from a property concept of power to a relational one created a revolution in power analysis.

In the discussion centred on power in international relations Peter Digeser identifies mainly four faces of power and propounds that the current debate is dealing with the fourth face of power. In the first face of power discourse, 'who' is exercising power was what mattered. The second face concerned 'what' are the issues raised and by 'whom'; the third face involved the question of 'whose' objective interests are being harmed; and the fourth face discusses 'what kind' of subject is being produced, and this precisely is the current debate on power. The fourth face precisely refers to what Joseph Nye started talking about in the 1990's as soft power (Digeser, 1992: 977-989).

However, today power is no longer considered as monolithic and unidimensional, but rather as multidimensional, involving dimensions of scope, domain, weight, costs, means etc. (ibid, 2002: 178-79). It's the multidimensional nature of power itself that makes it difficult to add up various dimensions in order to reach at some overall estimate of an actor's power. The estimate of an actor's 'overall power' is almost always bound to be controversial (ibid) because unlike hard core economic or military power with specific indicators of its presence or strength, political power does not have any comparable standard of value in terms of which to add up various dimensions of power. At the end, all politics is about power and is the ability to influence the behaviour of others based on the capacity to reward or punish (Heywood, 1994: 150) and brings about compliance through persuasion, pressure, threats, coercion or violence.

Hence based on how the power is asserted (through threats and coercion or attraction and cooption) two forms of power have been recognised: hard power and soft power. *Hard power*, i.e. the ability to coerce, emanates out of a country's military and economic might. *Soft power*, on the other hand describes the persuasive (as opposed to the coercive military) dimension of power, and is a key factor today in the regulation of cordial relations amongst nations. The various aspects and definitions of soft power would be discussed in detail further in this chapter, comparing and contrasting it with hard power in order to develop a better understanding of the concept.

Defining Soft Power

The theory of soft power can be traced to the works of E. H. Carr, Hans J. Morgenthau, Klaus Knorr, and Ray Cline (Huang and Ding, 2006: 23). The intellectual connection between Morgenthau and Nye is evident from Nye's emphasis on characteristics of the states. Steven Lukes also once asserted that those aspects of power that are least accessible to observation needed to be attended to with immediate effect. In his words, 'indeed, power is most effective when least observable', (Lukes, 2005: 38-42) and soft power if not least observable is definitely the translucent face of power. The last quarter of the 20th century was marked by a strong move toward the integration of national economies through foreign investment, technological change, international trade, and immigration. As countries encouraged the flow of goods and services across borders, there was no simultaneous integration of political regimes, which marked a slow shift of power away from the nation state's ability to hold multinational corporations accountable to serve the interests of citizens within their respective borders. Today, due to massive globalization, we are way past the 'statist' period where countries were the sole arbiters of power and have entered an era of globalization characterized by 'governance without government' (Baldwin, 2002: 177). Hence with growing interstate conflicts, advent of the global information age and evolution of an environment with multiple transnational linkages, it would be a cliché to state that soft power is vital to maintain a position of influence in international politics. But what exactly is soft power and how does it influence international relations? This question needs to be addressed first.

'Soft power' is a term coined by Harvard professor Joseph S. Nye Jr. in 1990 to 'suggest corrective measures for failing United States' international standing' (Anas, 2010:

238). He used it to describe the ability to get ‘others to want what you want’. He noted that this ability to affect preferences of others ‘tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology and institutions’ (Nye, 1990: 56). However on the other hand, the traditional hard power is usually associated with ‘tangible resources’ like military and economic strength. This is the basic point of distinction between hard power and soft power. By the term soft power Nye had in mind not only the compelling example of democracy, a free society and economy, but also appeal of mass culture around the world. He contends that soft power essentially enables a nation to “achieve desired outcomes in international affairs through attraction rather than coercion” (Nye, 2004: 5). Simply put it would be the “the second face of power”, an indirect way to get what one wants without any tangible threats or pay offs (ibid). Until recently soft power was considered largely, almost exclusively, an American weapon of influence. But as the economic and technological advancements grew, learning to wield soft power as astutely as its ‘hard’, or military and financial might, became paramount to acquire a position of influence in the international arena of power wrestling for almost every nation state.

The culture, values and policies are considered quintessential resources of soft power for any nation. As per Nye’s conception, the soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority) (Nye, 2006b). Jeffrey Legro also agrees that “position is a source of influence in international relations and hard as well as soft power both are decisive in shifting the position” (Legro, 2011: 2-4). In other words power plus capabilities establish position, and soft power is decisive in this process. But the question arises that does having power resources automatically furnish a position of influence to a nation? Does the popularity of Hollywood or Chinese food or yoga amongst masses all over the world automatically channelize power and influence of the respective nations over the rest?

It does not seem to be the case always. Power resources do not automatically translate into effective influence or direct compliance. Put differently, even those best endowed with power do not always achieve their desired outcomes. Converting resources into realised power in the sense of obtaining the desired outcomes requires well designed strategies, effective tools for policy implementation and skilful leadership. What needs to be identified is that which resources provide the best basis for power behaviour in a particular

context. This is not unique to just soft power. It is true for hard power as well. Afghanistan and Vietnam are exemplary instances which showcased that the side with the larger army doesn't always win. But the side with the better story, the more attractive culture, and more numerous channels of communication, always does better than the one which only has guns (Tharoor, 2007: 1). As Potter explains, "If a country fails to tell its own story, its image will be shaped exclusively by the perceptions of others" (Byers, 2009: 1). After all about 'half of the power politics consists of image-making' only (Herz, 1981: 184-189), though this may be another fact that image management is now more of a mass market driven agenda rather than being manipulated by chosen few policy elites, as was the case earlier. However this fact also stands true that though soft power cannot produce results as fast as hard power, its effects are more long-lasting and it is less expensive than hard power (Purushothaman, 2010: 3-4). To a considerable extent a country's influence, is determined by what others think of it. At the end of the day, a country's brand matters. Influencing public opinion abroad now is as important to achieving foreign policy goals as interstate negotiations. In today's media age 'power of image' has attained huge significance in international politics (Pocha, 2003: 6) and international relations are increasingly being driven by only a handful of global media giants and numerous non-state groups that go beyond the international and domestic spheres. This is why soft power is often linked to the rise of globalization and neoliberal theory. The increase of soft power influence in international relations stems not only from the increased political activities of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) but also from the political vulnerabilities of the situation today (Steiner, 2011: 2).

Some Examples of Soft Power

What's also noteworthy is that soft power is not solely confined to states or international relations alone. It applies to a much wider range of actors and contexts as institutions, INGOs or even groups or persons. Soft power is not an ethical prescription but just a description. Like any form of power, it can be wielded for good or ill. Hitler, Stalin, and Mao, after all, possessed a great deal of soft power in the eyes of their acolytes. The terrorist outfit Al Qaeda and their leader Osama Bin Laden have impressive soft power among their followers. Even after the killing of the leader in Operation Neptune Spear in May 2011, he is still considered to be the 'fallen angel' by certain factions of Islamist fundamentalists. So it is not necessarily better to twist minds than to twist arms (Nye, 2006c: 1). Nye himself contends that although soft power in the wrong hands can have horrible

consequences, it can in some cases offer morally superior means to certain goals, as is seen in the case of Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr's choice of soft power and Yasser Arafat's choice of the gun (ibid). Gandhi and King were able to attract moderate majorities over time with favourable consequences both in effectiveness and in ethical terms. Arafat's strategy of hard power, by contrast, killed innocent Israelis and drove Israeli moderates into the arms of the hard right (Nye, 2006b: 1). Similarly, some simple examples of soft power being projected by different states are also abundant. The US benefits enormously from its dominance of popular culture, democratic values and institutions, human rights policies, free market system, high living standards, technological advances, and internationally renowned institutions of higher learning (Lum, 2008: 2). France is renowned for its wine and cheeses; Italy for fashion; China for its food and Buddhism; India for yoga. Britain has Shakespeare, the Queen and Manchester United. Thus every nation pertaining to the culture, ideals and policies they uphold, do own potential soft power resources and try to project it as attractively as they can. In fact Britain and France have been at it for years through the British Council and the Alliance Francaise respectively (Tran, 2008: 1). On the other hand China has been setting up over 700 Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms around the world since 2004 to promote its language and culture and thereby to shape its image (Hartig, 2011: 54). Countries like Norway gather immense soft power through its role as mediator in conflict resolution and Canada for its assertive stance on international cooperation. Even Korea in the early 2000s started mounting a systematic attempt to cash in on Korean culture by setting up KOCCA (The Korea Culture & Contents Agency) in 2002 which focuses mainly on transforming traditional cultural works of the Korean history into digital contents. As KOCCA mentions in its brochure, in today's information era the global community has witnessed a shift from IT as being leading world technology to CT i.e. culture technology (KOCCA, 2010: official website). Now having developed a basic idea of what soft power is, we need to delve on how is it similar or different from other traditional sources of hard power.

Soft Power vs Hard Power

E.H. Carr had written during the World War period that 'power over opinion' was 'not less essential for political purposes than military and economic power, and has been closely associated with them'(Carr, 1939: 132 & 141). Simply put in Nye's terminology, 'hard power' and 'soft power' are inextricably linked (Mellissen, 2005: 5). Hard power, the ability to coerce, grows out of a country's military and economic might. Soft power arises

from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. Nye makes a clear-cut distinction between how soft and hard power are used. Hard power is evident in the practices of threat, coercion, sanction, payment, and inducement, whereas soft power is demonstrated in attraction, persuasion, appeal, and co-optation. He however opposes the misuse of the concept as a synonym for anything other than military force. As interpreted by a Chinese scholar, "hard power basically can be acquired and expanded within a given political community, but soft power is more dependent upon the international identification with certain cultural values and international support to certain institutions" (Mingjiang, 2009: 3). Soft power in general is preferable whenever possible: "When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction" (Nye, 2004: 6). Nye implicitly refers to the distinction between hard power and soft power as largely a difference in how a country uses its power resources (ibid). Values like democracy, human rights, and individual opportunities are deeply seductive and seduction per say is often more effective than coercion. Joffe however finds seduction to be worse than even imposition. "It makes you feel weak, and so you hate the soft-pawed corrupter as well as yourself" (Joffe, 2001: 46). But attraction takes no time in turning into repulsion if either of the parties involved appears arrogant or hypocritical. For example, China does not seem to understand that using culture and narrative to create soft power is a much harder task when they are inconsistent with domestic realities. The 2008 Olympics were a success, but shortly afterwards, China's domestic crackdown in Tibet and Xinjiang, and on human rights activists, immensely undercut its soft power gains and distorted its glossy image (Overdorf, 2012: 1). But hard power still remains crucial in a scenario where states are trying to guard their independence, and non-state groups such as terrorist organizations are willing to turn to violence. However, soft power also definitely plays a vital role in preventing terrorists from recruiting supporters, and dealing with transnational issues that require multilateral cooperation (Nye, 2006a: 26).

Other than this there are also a lot of definitional, conceptual, institutional and political differences and complexities between hard and soft power (Wilson III, 2008: 114). Hard power strategies when *conceptually* viewed, focus on military intervention, coercive diplomacy, and economic sanctions to enforce national interests (Art 1996; Campbell and O'Hanlon 2006; Cooper 2004; Wagner 2005). In academic writing, it is the neorealist approaches that tend to emphasize hard power, especially the hard power of states, while liberal institutionalist scholars emphasize soft power as an essential resource of statecraft

(along with the power to write the rules of the game, a curiously missing element in contemporary conversations of hard and soft power). When *institutionally* viewed; the size, status, budget, and institutional culture of a state shape the exercise of power. The institutional landscape for hard and soft power upholds huge asymmetry. Simply put, the institutions of hard power are vastly, disproportionately larger, better funded, and more influential than the institutions of soft power. In all countries, in the real world of public policy, the powers to coerce and the powers to persuade are spread across a number of agencies. However, the spread is lumpy and unequal. The institutional reality is that the soft power institutions are in a subordinate position, lacking the resources and clout of their hard power counterparts. When *politically* viewed, not surprisingly, the political asymmetries of hard and soft power are just as skewed as the institutional imbalances. The allies of hard power are much more numerous, visible, and powerful than their soft power counterparts. Soft power has few such natural political connections. A handful of professional organizations regularly call for greater attention to diplomacy, often led by former diplomats. But there is simply no counterpart to the huge political base of the hard power community. Instead, the firm advocates of soft power and its wider introduction into foreign policy making exist as scattered public intellectuals in various think tanks and universities, or the occasional consulting group (ibid).

As a matter of common observation the sources of soft power do not always produce attraction, persuasion, appeal, and emulation. Culture, ideology, values, and norms also often result in resentment, repulsion, hostility, and even conflict. On the other hand, hard power is not always used for coercion, threat, intimidation, and inducement. Hard power can also produce attraction, appeal, and amity in certain circumstances. Excessive or inappropriate use of hard power can lead to the decline of a state's soft power. Misuse of military resources can simply undercut soft power. Coercive democratization has its limits and this was proved right when the US incurred heavy soft power losses in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Soviets had a great deal of soft power in the years after World War II, but they destroyed it by the way they used their hard power against Hungary and Czechoslovakia. However, the traditional sources of hard power can also be sources of soft power if, for instance, they are used for international peacekeeping activities or for humanitarian purposes such as disaster relief. The response to the U.S. rescue efforts in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami was very positive. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief missions typically supported by the navy are also examples of the same as seen in the cases of Haitian

earthquake (January 2010) as well as Tohoku emergency (March 2011) where multinational fleets rushed to the assistance of the island nations. The naval vessel USS *Essex* in Tohoku and the Italian aircraft carrier *Cavour* in Haiti played vital role in opening up the key affected areas (Mizokami, 2011: 1). In the words of Ernest Wilson, when these conceptual, institutional and political challenges in integrating hard and soft power are met effectively, that's when smart power would be wielded.

Critical Analysis of Soft Power: Varied Views

Although the concept of soft power has been widely talked about and discussed, yet a number of its aspects are still contestable and draw criticism from different corners of the academia, policy analysts and practitioners of foreign policy. Some of the critical views of various scholars on the concept of soft power are being discussed below:

There is an increased consensus amongst certain scholars that it would be inappropriate to apply the concept of soft power indiscriminately onto different nation states. Confusion culminates as analysts “attempt to graft an American-originated concept” onto nations with completely different socio-political and economic contexts (Wilson III, 2008: 116). On this Nye clarifies that whether power resources produce a favourable outcome or not definitely depends upon the context. E.g. the fact that a foreigner drinks Coca-Cola or wears a Michael Jordan T-shirt or eats at McDonalds does not in itself mean that America has power over him. This view just confuses ‘resources’ with ‘behaviour’. This reality is not unique to only soft-power resources. Boasting of a larger tank an army may produce military victory if a battle is fought in the desert, but not if it is fought in swampy jungles such as Vietnam it could turn out to be counterproductive. Also as a matter of fact, not all the states and actors possess soft power in the ways that Nye has presented in context of the US and this is where the role of public diplomacy becomes crucial in giving an edge over the strategies of many other governments in exerting influence (Hocking, 2005: 35). After all, the underlying rationale of the soft power paradigm is that people are considered to be sole targets of foreign policy (Hill, 2003: 279).

Another strong allegation put forth against soft power is that it is vague and hence immeasurable. An inherent flaw of soft power, as Ferguson points out, is that ‘it is soft!’, (Ferguson, 2003; Hocking 2005: 21) at times too soft to be effective. Alone it just cannot be used as a wonder drug to cure the maladies amongst states in international politics. But the concept of soft power still needs further clarification (Baldwin, 2006). The intangible

qualities of culture, ideology and institutions that constitute soft power are more difficult to measure than tangible resources such as military and economic strength. While ‘tangibility’ of power resources is considered to be a defining criterion, it is not clear what tangibility exactly implies. He rightly remarks that soft power is indeed a ‘huge conceptual misstep in the right direction’ (Baldwin, 2006: 186). As mentioned earlier too, whether power resources produce power behaviour largely depends on the context (ibid). Nye agreeably replies that it is important not to confuse the resources that may produce behaviour with the behaviour itself. Whether the possession of power resources actually produces favourable outcomes depends on the context plus the skills of the agent employed in converting the resources into behavioural outcome. For example, eating at McDonalds, listening to hip-hop, drinking Coke or the Boston Red Sox hiring a Japanese pitcher does not necessarily convey power. Notably, this is not unique to soft power resources only (Nye, 2006d, 10).

In recognition of the paradox of measurement of the intangible resources Walker remarks that certain statistics can be determined or at least roughly estimated, such as the number of people speaking a certain language, watching movies or television from a certain country, the number of diplomats on the ground, or the number of exchange students studying in a given country etc. These numbers however cannot be combined into an index of soft power (Walker, 2008: 33). Nye further adds that whether a particular asset is a soft-power resource that produces attraction can be measured by conducting polls and gathering more and more information by asking people through polls or focus groups (Nye, 2004: 6). He uses these polls conducted in other countries as a measure of a country’s soft power, especially the U.S. based Pew Global Attitudes Project’s *What the World Thinks* polls. According to Walker these polls provide a baseline for what certain countries’ populations think of various aspects of American culture and policies, including whether they admire U.S. technology and scientific advances; like American movies, music, and television; like American ideas about democracy; like the American way of doing business; and think it is good that American ideas and customs spread (Walker, 2008: 34). Even Kurlantzick followed Nye’s lead, and used a poll of 22 and 33 countries to compare attitudes toward and opinions of the United States and China in 23 countries in 2004-5 and 33 countries in 2006. Through these polls he demonstrated that American soft power is on the decline and Chinese soft power is on the rise (ibid: 34). But Walker’s critique on Nye’s technique of estimating soft power through opinion polls poses one major problem. He says soft power can be divided into high and low soft power (as mentioned earlier also), the elites of a country and the

general public. A poll of the general public may not capture how willing the policymakers in a particular country are to cooperate, since each group may have a different set of goals or base of information, and a country's population or even rulers can like American movies but still hate the country and be loath to cooperate—as with North Korea's Kim Jong II, who is known to be an American movie buff. *Secondly*, is something that is built up over time whereas a poll measures people's opinion at one point in time, and thus are likely to reflect or be distorted by recent events—positive or negative—rather than accurately recording some level of built up diplomatic goodwill. Using trends in public opinion between different polls is perhaps a better indicator of whether a country's soft power is increasing or decreasing in a certain country or region, but it is still not useful or even possible to say that because 58 percent of the people in a given country like American culture that the United States has 5.8 units of soft power vis-à-vis that country. *Finally*, problem is that such public opinion polls are most commonly conducted by Western powers and the polling is easiest and probably most accurate when done in Western countries. So to the extent that polling data is useful in measuring soft power, it is primarily available to measure world opinions of the United States, and most accurately and frequently measures opinions in Europe; polling data on opinions around the world of China, India, or other countries is far scarcer. Polling data has many flaws, but is one of the only stand-ins for soft power available, so the results should be analyzed, but viewed with scepticism (ibid: 35).

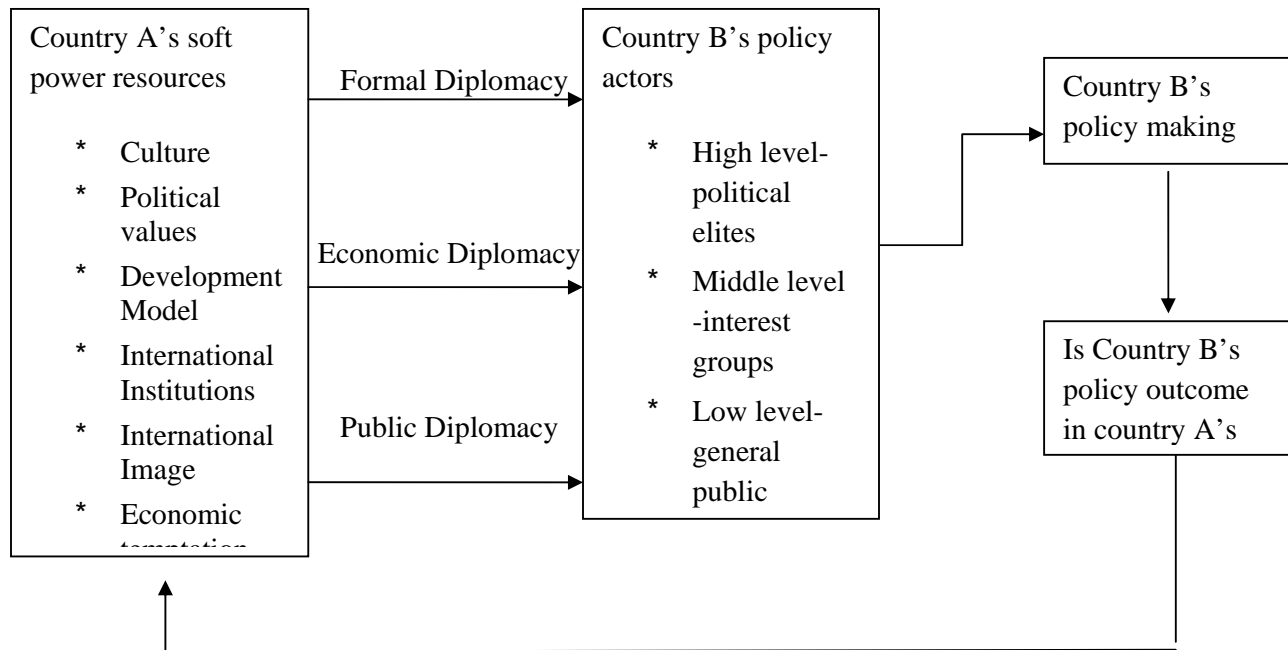
Another very interesting critique of Nye's soft power theory comes from Jacques Hymans who has put forth some basic correctives to Nye's 'overly simple conception' (Hymans, 2008: 236). *Firstly*, He problematizes some of the assumptions on which Nye bases the entire concept. To presume that similarities always attract could be too much of a generalization, opposites could attract too. Attraction could take place not just because of resemblance to the other but because of opposing features also. E.g. India was markedly different than Victorian Britain which made it even more enticing for its colonizers. *Secondly*, Hymans points out that attractiveness could be counterproductive at times. Instead of breeding soft power it could also breed soft vulnerability. For example, the oil rich Middle East and some African countries have always been strong attractants to the West since the industrial revolution and the massive increase in demand for more and more energy resources. This has made the region to be vulnerable turning it into a soft target in the hunt of the developed nations for more and more oil and energy. *Thirdly*, On the contrary, just a simple assumption that unattractiveness could produce soft vulnerability is also flawed. And

lastly, Hymans is ardently against the presumption that liberal policies are the key to international attractiveness. The case has been exactly the opposite in the case of the US and UK which have been hypocritical in their approach. Often propagating a liberal attitude yet following conservative policies in practice (ibid).

Watanabe Yasushi and David M. McConnell level another criticism at Nye's theory is that it is overly 'state-centered' (Yasushi & McConnell, 2008: 19). Many other scholars argue that soft power doesn't just comprise of the three ideals proposed by Nye, there are other dynamics at play too. Nye's notion of soft power does not highlight the role of non-state actors in shaping of foreign societies and thus their important role in American predominance. But however, a closer reading of Nye's work shows that he is well aware of the strong influence of non-state actors such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), businesses, universities, religious organizations, ethnic groups, and international organizations (Nye, 2004: 90-97). Nye also recognizes that governments cannot manage soft power to the same extent as hard power. At the same time, one cannot help but unanimously agree that Nye's analysis ultimately comes back to the state. He, for instance, does up to certain extent describe the perils awaiting governments that ignore soft power.

On the other hand Xin Li and Verner Worm although accepting the three-source model of soft power (i.e. its culture, political values, foreign policies) have gone one step ahead of Nye and expanded it to six pillars: *cultural attractiveness*, *political values*, *development model*, *international institutions*, *international image*, and *economic temptation*. They have also identified three channels for wielding soft power- namely formal, economic, and cultural diplomacies- with formal diplomacy targeting the political elites, economic and public diplomacy targeting interest groups, and public diplomacy targeting the general public of another country (Li and Worm, 2010: 72-75). They contend that the six sources of soft power mentioned above can all be generalized, however there might also be some country-specific soft power resources. For instance, in the 1980s and 1990s Japanese management system had a huge influence in the West because Japanese management philosophy and practice are uniquely different from theirs; and this gave Japan a unique source of soft power. Another example is ancient Chinese military philosophy manifested in the art of war which is still in practice in one way or the other in today's warfare. Owing to all this Li and Worm propose an integrative model of soft power as illustrated below:

Fig 2.1: An Integrative model of soft power

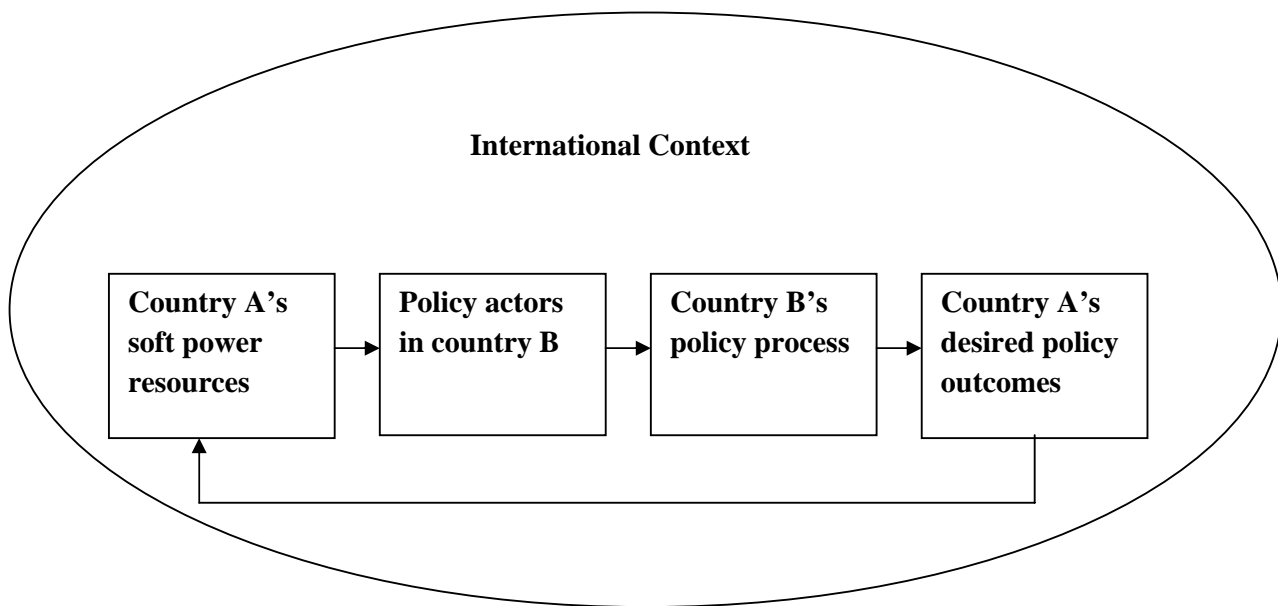


[Source: Li and Worm, 2010]

Josh Kurlantzick's argument also stands in agreement to Li and Worm that soft power can be 'high' when targeted at political elites, or 'low' when targeted at the broader public (Kurlantzick, 2006: 1). The difference between the two lies in the fact that firstly, high soft power is more direct than low soft power because political elites can exert more immediate impact on policy making than general public can. Secondly, soft power over high level political elites does not directly translate into soft power over low level general public, an example being the contrast that while Beijing sends goodwill gestures to New Delhi, but the media and mass opinion expresses hostility over many issues, be it the border dispute or the row over refusal of visas. In connection with Kurlantzick and Huang and Ding, Li and Worm hence add a middle level of soft power too, candidly targeted at the interest groups whose impact on a country's policy-making is more direct than the low level general public but less direct than the high level political elites. These interest groups include business associations, ethnic groups, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, and others (Li and Worm, 2010: 74).

Huang and Ding also point out that Nye's theory fails to provide 'a causal mechanism to explain how states convert potential soft power resources to realized power or the changed preference or behaviour of others', which leaves him with no other option than to judge whether soft power resources produce desired policy outcomes in particular cases or not. They, in order to remedy this problem, have constructed a simple model to connect soft power resources to policy outcomes (Huang and Ding, 2006: 25). It is illustrated in the figure given below.

Fig 2.2: From Soft Power Resources to Desired Policy Outcomes



[Source: Huang and Ding, 2006]

Zhu Feng on the other hand argues that soft power is all about whether the international community accepts a nation's policies and strategic choices or not and to what extent are those choices in sync with most nations' interests (Feng, 2007: 1). Another study by few Chinese scholars argues that depending on the context, any source of power can be both hard and soft, and "China model" comprising of multilateralism, economic diplomacy, and a "good neighbour" policy best exemplifies China's soft power according to them. These studies suggest that one needs to be more careful in treating hard power and soft power separately on the basis of resources. Some other scholars argue that in much of the existing discussion on soft power what is also missing is the 'social context' that either breeds or

hampers the growth of soft power. The Beijing consensus is a perfect example of this. Many argue that the success of the Chinese model of development, based on political authoritarianism plus economic liberalism, is quite appealing to many third-world countries and thus is a source of soft power for China. However, what is noteworthy is that while the Beijing consensus may be attractive to some countries, its negative effect on China's relations with most Western powers cannot be blatantly ignored. Whether or not these factors constitute hard or soft power, therefore, depends on the specific social context. This, in view of Li, in a way renders the categorization of power sources into the dichotomy of hard power and soft power somewhat inappropriate (Mingjiang Li, 2009: 7).

Mingjiang Li goes moderate and propounds a 'soft use of power' approach to effectively wield soft power and increase a state's attraction, persuasiveness, and appeal. He believes that it is the behavioural approach best captures the essence of soft power. If culture, ideology, and values can be used for coercion, and military and economic strength can be used for attraction and appeal, a better approach to soft power is how the resources of power are used rather than associating sources of power as soft or hard. Instead of focusing on only the resources of soft power, if more attention is paid on how a state uses its capability, a better understanding of how culture, values, and institutions can be brought into the discussion of soft power would be developed (ibid). Mingjiang Li and other scholars specifically attack on culture as a source of soft power, contending that it does not only serve to enhance good relations among states. If a country pursues an aggressive cultural policy, it may effectively result in fear of cultural hegemony or cultural imperialism. Culture, which is often regarded as the bedrock of soft power, can actually be a catalyst for major conflicts (ibid). This is evident in the US war on terror sans the Muslim world or Israel-Palestine crisis etc. Although some aspects in a culture may seem natural and appropriate in a certain society or to a certain social group but may be completely unacceptable to people in other societies. In order to gain soft power, a state mostly tries to exhibit the good part of its culture which seems to be enjoyable or agreeable and more palatable to others, and conceals those elements that may cause uneasiness, misgiving or disapproval in other states. Hence if culture spawns conflict and hatred then Samuel Huntington's proposition that, "the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic...the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural," (Huntington, 1993) would stand to come true.

Conclusion

Thus, to sum up we can say that Nye's concept of soft power does not just seem to be restricted to only three sources of 'culture, ideals and policies'. There are many more complex dynamics involved in the generation and wielding of soft power. And as pointed out earlier these resources do not always have a positive influence in shaping the preferences of others and can at times also turn out to be counterproductive if handled and projected inadvertently. All in all from the above detailed discussion we can say that soft power is vital in today's conduct of international relations. Having roughly delved into the soft power's conceptual intricacies and practical implications thereof, the research would now mainly focus on the case of India and its endeavours to cash on the immense soft power potential it upholds. India having a cultural history of thousands of years is undoubtedly rich in culture, heritage and values ranging from its music and Bollywood to spirituality and yoga, from tandoori chicken and cricket to Taj Mahal and Buddhism; the list just goes on. But despite of all these rich cultural resources India still lags far behind than its neighbours like China and Japan in tapping on its soft power credentials. It hasn't been able to devise effective 'tools' and 'policy' for translating its soft power potential fully. A deeper enquiry into this issue will be taken up in the following chapters.

Chapter 3

Resources, Channels and Instruments of Indian Soft Power

Introduction

In the preceding chapter we have discussed how soft power is not always confined to its major resource components such as 'culture, ideals and policies'. There are many other dynamics involved, including a few country specific resources as well. But these structural components do not always have a positive influence in shaping the preferences of others and can at times also turn out to be counterproductive, if handled and projected inadvertently.

The present chapter, therefore, tries to delineate a critical assessment on the above mentioned issues in Indian context. Li and Worm's inclusive and comprehensive six pillared model of soft power, would be used in the Indian context so as to analyse the various resources of Indian soft power. Nye's theory does not seem to be as effective and all encompassing as their extended version of the same. However, in order to better understand the diversity amongst the resources of soft power, three of Nye's quintessential values of *culture, ideals* and *foreign policy*, would be taken up first and subsequently followed by a discussion on certain India specific resources of soft power as well such as foreign aid, economic temptation, participation in international institutions etc. This would help develop a deeper understanding of the wide plethora of Indian soft power resources. After that the discussion would be directed towards deciphering the *channels of wielding soft power*- namely formal, economic, and cultural diplomacies- with formal diplomacy targeting the political elites, economic and public diplomacy targeting interest groups, and public diplomacy targeting the general public of another country.

Therefore, the present chapter will try to open up the debate by keeping Indian perspective into account. Here the main goal would be to give a critical perspective related to the immense soft power potential India upholds. The chapter will also gauge the intricacies and structural components relating to the concept of soft power in Indian context and to study

whether these components facilitate or hamper in the India's overall goal of becoming soft power. In addition, we will also study the various institutional inadequacies related to the overall creation of 'Brand India' and to analyse as to what extent it caters to India's aspiration in becoming a soft power.

But what becomes extremely important here is to clarify that becoming a 'soft power' does not imply becoming a 'soft state' as is perceived by not only general public abroad but also many Indians themselves. This might have been the scenario prior to 1990s but today it would be an overt simplification and inappropriate to equate 'softness' with 'weakness' or 'hardness' with 'strength'. Soft and hard power can both at times lead to 'soft vulnerability' meaning seeing others do what you don't want because of how they see you. Thus, as Hymans puts it, the prime "challenge for India's 'national brand managers' today is not how to *overcome* the country's traditional 'softness', but rather how to avoid *overcorrecting* away from it" (Hymans, 2010: 1).

Indian Soft Power

India is undoubtedly rich in soft power resources owing to its culture, heritage and values inherited from a history of thousands of years. In International politics and political terms too, India looks like a 'soft power by default' (Wagner, 2010b: 334). This can be attributed to India's traits like the democratic tradition of more than 60 years, Mahatma Gandhi with his affiliation to non-violence and peaceful conflict mediation as national hero, Bollywood with a quasi-global dream fabric, and India's long engagement in multilateral institutions. These are all indicators that seem to qualify India as one of the leading soft power superpower of the future as well. Moreover, the high economic growth rates following the liberalisation after 1991 have also, to some extent, increased the country's international attractiveness.

Nevertheless, a closer look reveals many limitations of India's soft power capabilities. India as the world's largest democracy has always been very reluctant to promote her democratic ideals abroad (ibid: 334). For decades a mere mention of India conjured up images of an under-clothed, underfed and overpopulated nation (Pocha, 2003: 1) which rendered the West, already ensnared in the post-war consumerist quagmire, a little disconnected. Moreover, Indian political turmoil and economic stagnation of the 1960s and

1970s had also brought a bad name to India. It was only after the liberalization and reforms of the 1980s and 1990s that the image of a hungry emaciated India changed to one of a potential future superpower. This, in a way, demonstrates a linkage of soft power to the rise of globalization and neo liberalism. Thus, started India's crusade for honing its "soft power" skills and show the world that it had much more on the platter to offer to the world.

Moreover, the recent rapid growth of the economy, though, has situated India more seriously than ever as a major power in world politics, yet it needs to reflect upon as to how to channelize this immense growing power into a fruitful end, because just drinking coke or watching a Bollywood film does not automatically convey power for any country the US or India. So, a lot needs to be done yet in terms of policy formation and implementation. As Dipankar Gupta puts it succinctly, "A democratic state needs to quicken the pace and buck the trend and not just mind the store. The conditions in India do not allow, the state, the luxury to leisurely roll back and look out of the window" (Gupta, 2009: 5).

In addition, the real promise for Indian soft power, to some extent, lies in the future. As in recent years, India has adopted foreign policies that have increased its attraction to others, but still it does not rank as high on the various indices of potential soft power resources on the line of the US, Europe and Japan yet (discussed in detail in chapter 4). While culture provides some soft power, domestic policies and values set limits, as is the case particularly in China, where the Communist Party fears allowing too much intellectual freedom, censors the internet, and resists outside influences. This is where India has an advantage. India was fortunate to be born with a democratic constitution and political structure, unlike its neighbour which repeatedly fell prey to authoritarian regimes. But, as mentioned in the preceding paragraph, India still faces many challenges of poverty where large chunk of population often survive on less than one dollar a day, caste system and corruption coupled with inefficiency in the provision of public services are both an all encompassing phenomena.

But India is also changing and adapting within a broad democratic set-up which is quite evident from the skills and professionalism of India's military establishment. These aspects of Indian military reflect an important potential of both hard and soft power. One such example is the impressive cooperation of the Indian and American militaries in providing relief after the Indian Ocean tsunami which reflects and enhances the soft power of

both the countries. But on the contrary, misuse of military resources could also undercut soft power.

Nevertheless, as Nye says, it would be safely predicted over the rise of India's hard and soft powers in the years to come rendering it the status of a "smart power" (Nye, 2006b": 1). But at the same time India's soft power potential has to be aligned craftily with the current ongoing changes. As the international system of the twenty-first century characterised by diverging trends where on the one hand, the economic benefits of globalisation have increased national state power and have strengthened the idea of a multi-polar world. On the other hand, non-state actors challenge state authority and global institutions exert increasing influence on state behaviour via international regimes and regulations. Under these conditions of growing political and economic interdependences, a non-polar world (Haass, 2008: 44–56) will therefore be a much more likely scenario than a multi-polar order. In such constellations traditional concepts of hard power will no longer be sufficient to pursue national interests and as a result, the concept of soft power gets an obvious emphasis and expansion mainly in terms of its scope which subsequently makes the analysis of international politics more inclusive and pervasive (Nye, 2004).

As a result, the attractiveness of a state and societal model which consist the core of the idea of soft power has not only triggered a rigorous debate and a scurry for policy initiatives in the US and Europe but also in China where a stronger focus is being devoted on soft power in its foreign policy in recent years. Therefore, the academic debate on soft power in China has been increased as the number of Confucius Institutes that propagate Chinese language and culture has risen to 272 in August 2009. China's new soft power engagement has also initiated a debate in the US which emphasises how to deal with this novel phenomenon (Lum et al., 2008).

ASSESSMENT OF RESOURCES

Cultural Attractiveness

Stephen P. Cohen discusses in his book *India Emerging Power* that what brews disappointment to the Indian strategic elite is the fact that "India has stirred the western imagination more because of its exotic and esoteric qualities than because of its power and influence as a state" (Cohen, 2001: 26). A nation's culture definitely is integral in formation

of the image or brand *per se*. But on the contrary the target audience in whose minds and psyche that particular image is to be projected and imprinted is also very crucial (Szondi, 2008).

Soft power for that matter is the new buzzword in the South Block. According to Bagchi, India has a huge potential in cultural soft power possessing many unique, attractive as well as competitive cultural resources. In order to harness this cultural legacy for the enhancement of its soft power, the government of India is trying to reposition Brand India, which will be dealt in detail in the subsequent pages, to harp on India's ancient civilisation through its films, cuisine, yoga, Ayurveda, information technology etc. (Bagchi, 2004: 1). So, MEA officials are repackaging Brand India to include what excites the new world such as Indian food, Indian art, classical music & dance, Indian fashion, films, yoga, tourism, IT and education, all of which are spreading around the world and contributing immensely to raise Indian culture higher in people's reckoning (Tharoor, 2007: 3).

Moreover, overseas the Government's efforts are aimed at getting Indian culture and music into the mainstream rather than confine it to the "alternative" or "ethnic". Confronted with a world that is rapidly turning faddish about India, be it health gurus prescribing turmeric-laden Indian curries for intestinal problems or Lonely Planet declaring India one of the top five tourist destinations in the world, the Indian Government is drawing up to the seductive prowess of Indian "soft power" (Bagchi, 2004: 1). By the 1990s an explosion of Indo-chic in the US was vehemently refashioning Western food, music, films, clothing, even home decor. By then, India had already occupied a particular place in the imagination of the West, symbolising a place of spirituality and a land of timeless tradition in keeping with the Western fascination with the "Orient". As a result, by the beginning of the mid-1990s, the Orientalist fascination with India took a new, mass-marketed turn with Madonna's henna-painted hands, Indian remix music and bhangra parties, the appearance of Bollywood films in the West along with the mainstreaming of yoga (Maira, 2006) Indians finally started leaving their indelible impact of Indian cultural tradition worldwide.

In this entire Indianisation process, the role of *Indian Diaspora* has been quite crucial. In fact it caught public attention by the film maker Mira Nair who reworked on diasporic fiction to create an international film with an Indian heart. Indian Diaspora with their presence ranges across a multitude of countries and professional categories leaving a mark at all levels of international business and political milieu (Malone, 2011a: 297). They

are spread across continents throughout Asia, Middle-East (the Gulf in particular), along the coasts of Africa, and found in large numbers in Australia, Canada, UK and USA, Guyana, Mauritius, Fiji, Tobago, Trinidad, Singapore and many other countries, seems to be winning hearts all over the world with their endearing character, humble nature and peaceful qualities. They have contributed immensely to the countries they have settled in and hold influence and respect in these countries. C. Raja Mohan points out that “people of Indian origin are extremely important sources of support for the Indian Government in the execution of its policies through the influence and respect they command in the countries that they live in” (Mohan, 2003). Many foreign countries have even been lead by leaders of Indian origin, like Bobby Jindal, Kamla Prasad Bissessar, Bal Gosal (Indo-Canadian MP), Nikki Randhawa Haley (Governor South Carolina), at one point or the other, in time (Malone, 2011a: 297). In addition to the socio cultural and political significance, the Indian Diaspora is also a crucial economic resource, mainly in the form of remittances, which constitutes a major part of India’s GDP.

However, according to the Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi, the NRI’s active contribution in India’s development is quite low, as their share in the foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country is quite miniscule, just about 1.3 per cent, and more than 95 per cent of the investments often come from domestic sources only. But the remittances from international migrants and overseas workers are important source to be reckoned with. In fact, India received \$46.9 billion as remittances during 2008-09 (*The Hindu*, 2011).

But Diaspora can also generate international tensions. The power struggle between ethnic Indians and indigenous islanders in Fiji over past decades, the ethnic conflict that arose in Sri Lanka due to LTTE are some of the grim unfortunate realities of Indian Diaspora (Malone, 2011). In fact, until recently, the attitude of some in India towards non-resident Indians (NRIs) was evident in the ironic interpretation of the acronym as meaning ‘Not Required Indians’ (Mark, 2008: 190). It’s only in the late 1990s and early years of the 21st century that greater recognition was given to the NRIs in India, particularly in political circles, and the contribution that its sizeable diaspora was valued. The diaspora were able to make an advancement of India’s interests in the countries in which they were domiciled, particularly in those countries which had politically or economically well placed Indian

ancestry. This was due in part to the increasingly outward focus of India's foreign policy, but it was also in part domestically driven (Mark, 2008: 191).

Adding further to India's cultural attractiveness, Indian film industry mainly Bollywood is often perceived as a significant source in generating soft power for India. India's film stars like Amitabh Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai or Shah Rukh Khan have become icons of India's cultural image. Their 'presence' and acceptance in millions of homes across the world especially south-east Asia is not only a source of joy and camaraderie, but also contributes to enhancing the comfort level between India and south-east Asia (Deware 2006: 171; Malone, 2011b). Nevertheless, many authors are quite sceptical about treating Bollywood as a true source of soft power for India which is quite evident when the former is compared with Hollywood. As a matter of fact, there is a significant distinction between the contexts of the soft power potential of Hollywood and Bollywood, as former's soft power is only possible because it corresponds with the economic and political power of the US, to propagate ideas and images of economic, political and societal development that became core of modernization theories in the 1950s and 1960s. Bollywood movies on the other hand might have a greater audience globally and may also promote certain types of ideal family life and gender relations; but compared to Hollywood they do not reflect or promote a universal model for political or cultural development and should therefore be seen as mere entertainment (Wagner, 2010b: 336). Moreover, Bollywood films mostly gloss over India's various problems with the extravaganza of song and dance rather than becoming a true source of soft power for India (Overdorf, 2012: 2).

Though, Indian tourism has an immense potential to become a major source of Indian soft power, but it is yet to take off on many accounts. No matter, Indian tourism, particularly religious tourism, often acts as a potential asset in India's relations with Asian nations, as in the case of Buddhist tourism, it is still far away from becoming a main cultural resource. In fact, it is often misunderstood that Indian tourism is on boom by seeing the recent spate of tourists from the various other countries of Asia to India but this increase is quite miniscule in a real terms (Acharya 2008: 15; Malone, 2011b) In addition, ongoing "Incredible India!" campaign for the promotion of Indian tourism is also destined to remain fruitless because of its "incredibly inconvenient and expensive" for many Asians. The value-for-money along with the economical comfort and facilities offered from the other Asian tourist destinations, including from China, have often been giving a better alternative to the

prospective Asian tourist. Back at home, India's overpriced, subpar hotels, combined with at times chaotic local conditions for tourists, unsympathetic state bureaucracies in charge of many tourist sites, and the stupendous archaeological and other attractions are hardly the Asian ideal for family holidays (Malone, 2011b).

But, generally the cultural resources of Asian countries, including China, are often marred with many lacunae and to some extent conform to the Indian experiences also. As Li and Worm explain that in China, firstly, there is still no clear cut distinction between government and cultural work units leading to an excessive governmental intervention in the operations of the latter. Secondly, regulations on investment and financing in cultural sector often forces cultural projects to run under budget constraints. There is often lack of adequate funding in order to carry out these cultural projects hence maiming the prospects of utilising cultural attractiveness as an element of enhancing soft power. And thirdly, lack of synergy due to the over fragmentation of cultural supervisory institutions and cultural work units further undercut the soft power prospects (Li and Worm, 2010: 76-77), similarly India also does not have this kind of synchronization between the cultural work units and the governments which has been discussed later in this chapter.

Nevertheless, it is not all in vain, as there are many positive outcomes of Indian tourism, diaspora, and Bollywood, though on a very small scale, which have added to India's general prosperity vis a vis its cultural attractiveness. As the process of globalisation speeds up, Indian Creative Industries have not only become more lucrative but also opened up many avenues to satiate the natural human urge by exploring one's own creativity. This is perhaps less tangible in other sectors, which are far more institutionalised and corporatized than the creative industry sector (Ramanathan, 2012). But, it is also argued that such trends create a new kind of hierarchy where the dominant commercial forces appropriate and exploit human creativity, exploit intellectual property of the less advantaged and generate a business sector that excludes the very sources of its business. In this context, Yoga, ayurveda and ancient philosophical, spiritual and knowledge traditions, to name a few, have turned out to be the biggest commercial money-spinners in the western world claiming even patent rights over some of these traditions (ibid, 2012).

But again, as Maira argues, Indian cultures leave very miniscule impact in shaping the policies of other countries. In fact, in conventional international politics, it is the

strategic interests of the countries involved that have a major say in shaping their current relationship rather than just henna, Bollywood, or yoga (Maira, 2006). Given the current scenario, it will be for a while before India's soft power projection takes on the quality of a British Council, Alliance Francaise or the USA's which has nurtured generations of Anglophiles and Francophiles. But be it for good or bad, India has been getting noticed all round the world today by dint of its cultural attractiveness (Bamzai, 2006).

Political Values

Indian political values enshrined in its constitution, mainly the soft power of its democracy, multi ethnic make-up, the vibrancy of its free society and the fierce freedom of its press among others have been acting as an inbuilt reservoir to provide immense soft power capacities. These political values in future seem to provide enough impetus for India to attain a great power status in the international politics. In addition, Indian struggle for development, justice, adequate representation, and respect underlying its political culture have also been a consistent source of both familiar and positive image to the outside world (Malone, 2011a: 296).

In addition, many scholars like Wagner find India to be a soft power by 'default' (Wagner: 2010b) owing to its age old democratic tradition, a rich and tolerant culture consisting of numerous heterogeneous entities turning India into an iconoclast of 'unity in diversity', active and progressive foreign policy consisting of ideals of peaceful coexistence and non-alignment and its long term engagement in multilateral institutions like World Bank, UN and IMF.

Conceptually, there are two aspects of a country's political values: one domestic, i.e., how the government rules its own people (political legitimacy), and one international, i.e., the principles and policies when dealing with other nations and international affairs (Li and Worm, 2010: 77). Since independence, India has been flaunting an unprecedented domestic record (in terms of political ideals) and comparatively clean and spotless in comparison to other countries decolonized after the World War II. Many scholars argue that India's greatest asset remains in its "accumulated political legitimacy" rather than any hypothetical or real accumulation of power. This argument, in fact, complements the very

conceptual core of “soft power” for any state where primacy is given to ‘political legitimacy’ (Malone, 2011a).

Nevertheless, India as the world’s largest democracy has always been very reluctant to promote its democratic ideals abroad (Wagner, 2010: 334). Owing to this long untarnished democratic history India has somehow not been able to live up to the democratic standards and people’s expectations due to a number of instances such as Human Rights violations in J&K, North East, its use of brute force to check the Maoist menace and heavy infestation of corruption in the political and bureaucratic fabric of the state. But due to India’s persistent efforts to allow its vibrant free press to pin down the government, opposition, corporates and fundamentalists for its myriad failures elsewhere relegate into the background (Overdorf, 2012: 2).

Indian free press has not only been consistently exposing those companies and organizations that have committed crimes but also publicized the very steps ought to be taken to solve the problems. It is a common observation that entities which deal face to face with the problems posed by public to them and try finding solutions, actually have a better image than the ones who don’t face any public problems at all (Overdorf, 2012: 3). As a corollary effect of this, Wagner designated, India to be a ‘defensive soft power’ that prioritizes ‘capacities’ over ‘capabilities’². He accuses India of utilizing her soft power mainly for image building than as an instrument to exert influence (Wagner, 2010b: 333).

Similarly, S D Muni, in his recent survey dealing with the democratic dimension of Indian foreign policy examines why the promotion of democracy has not evolved as a central theme of India’s international relations, as he envisions, because of its different kind of earlier political orientations. He attributes this disjunction to the excessive preoccupation of India’s foreign policy with non-alignment which drew its rationale from anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism where promotion of democracy seem to have breached the solidarity of the anti-colonial and anti-racial movement led by India under the umbrella of non-alignment (Muni 2009: 8). In fact, SD Muni and Malone stand in agreement to the argument that India’s ‘democratic credentials and values are unlikely to be favoured over its

² ‘Capacities’ point to the economic, political and cultural resources that states have at their disposal, whereas ‘Capabilities’ denote the transformation of such capacities or resources into instruments or initiatives of foreign policy.

key strategic interests' (Malone, 2011a: 297) in the process of policy making which shows that although democratic values add to India's soft power but in the key decision making and policy formulation national interest would be prioritized over this virtue. More recently, however, India has joined in a number of multilateral democracy promotion forums, including the Community of Democracies and became its founding member in 2000 (Malone, 2011).

Foreign Policy

Indian foreign policy is one of the major determinants of soft power formation. Indian Foreign Policy, which independently began in 1947, inherited not only the maladies of a colonial past but also the imperial geopolitical burdens. These obligations included the notions on relationships with smaller neighbours and the nature of interaction with India's extended neighbourhood (Mohan, 2003). But as India begins to emerge as a major power in Asia and the Indian Ocean region, it has been compelled to shed many of the post-independence ideas on the conduct of foreign policy, and called upon to provide security to other states in its neighbourhood (ibid).

Conceptually, foreign policy formulation requires a conciliation of ends and means, conditioned by the specifics of the country involved and of the wider international situation at any given time (Malone, 2011a: 274). As a wide generalisation, three factors shape the foreign policy of most countries: history, geography and capability along with certain other factors as economic performance, regional and global ambition etc. and each of these have decisively influenced Indian foreign policy, in different ways at different times (Malone, 2011b: 36). In fact Malone categorizes India's foreign policy into three broad phases: a 'Nehruvian period' of Indian reincarnation as an independent state with idealist undertones in foreign policy; a 'realist' phase accompanied by starker version of socialism from mid- 1960s to the late 1980s (producing mixed results at best on both foreign policy and economic fronts); and a 'new phase', extending into the present, inaugurated in the early 1990s with the opening up of the economy and introduction of economic reform and its rewards both for the Indian economy and for India's weight in the world (Malone, 2011a: 278).

But, there are certain lacunae attached to the Indian foreign policy when we take it in an operational term, which in a way also affect its potentials of soft power formation. Under conditions of globalization, the communitarian ambit of Indian foreign policy has stretched between the dilemma of serving legal sovereigns, sub national groups, global non state actors, and individuals (Chong: 2007). Its international policy is still mostly reactive, incremental and without any grand vision. India, being the world's biggest democracy is also coy to the point of meekness in promoting its values abroad. This lack of vision and loosely formulated foreign policy greatly erodes India's soft power.

Similarly, it is easy to see why India's long history of being invaded, and its preoccupation with holding itself together as a viable democratic state, have left it little scope for acting overseas. Indians, like Americans, can be insular, believing that their huge country is the centre of the world. It has few leaders as Jawaharlal Nehru who took foreign matters seriously, but he also got too engrossed in moralising and pointing at others' wicked deeds and trying to avoid being dragged in the cold war spur. As a result of this he could do little to promote national interests. India still grumbles over his hasty early decision of rejecting an offer of a permanent Security Council seat (Malone, 2011a: 295-96).

Yet India's biggest weakness, as Malone rightly points out, is in its own region. The traumatic Partition and the unending conflict with Pakistan have strongly influenced the way India conducts its external relations. India's socialist orientation at home and third world radicalism abroad in the first decades of independence have been the other defining features of India's perspectives on the world. The tragedy of partition left its relations with Pakistan eternally sour. But as the local hegemon it should be doing much more to foster economic ties and stability all over its back yard. Instead relations with all its neighbours, with the exception of a couple of minnows like Bhutan and the Maldives, are mostly sour, and regional trade is pitiful. Until India shows more charm—or strength—to those nearby, distant powers are likely to ignore its pretensions of global fraternal love.

Overall, as some scholars predict, India has slim chances to develop grand foreign-policy vision, opting instead for pragmatism guided by economic interest. Its competition with China for energy in the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa, would lead to more fierce battle for international recognition. India however would keep expanding its trade

with the rest of Asia and project itself as a model of rapid economic growth and tolerant democracy in the world (ibid: 2011).

But overall, India finds it very challenging to build domestic political support for foreign policy initiatives simply by giving the 'argument of power'. The argument of national interest is more compelling to Indians. But Delhi has also continued to need a set of values and norms to justify its actions on the world stage. As a consequence the tension between 'power and principle' remains an enduring one of India's foreign policy. (Malone, 2011a: 296-97).

But India's recent disengagement from the large Southern groups that it once partnered with in the G-4, G-15 and G-33, is mainly driven by India's 'great power perceptions' (Chenoy and Chenoy, 2007: 3553). They argue that India's decreased engagement with the Third World curtails its soft power. It shows how faulty power perception and foreign policy dissipates its soft power and thus renders its 'soft power' policies as still being stuck in the neorealist framework where national interest holds centre stage regardless of its impact on its citizens (ibid).

OTHER RESOURCES

Foreign Aid

From the above discussion, one may predict safely for India as a prospective soft power stalwart, despite the multifarious problems it faces. But most of the scholars and analysts including the South Asian ones have rarely taken into account its bountiful soft power resources as a possible source of material power, especially in the realm of foreign assistance. No doubt, earlier in the 1950s and 60s India was a major recipient of aid but it has also been providing modest amounts of assistance to smaller and less-developed neighbours, especially Bhutan and Nepal, mainly in the form of technical assistance. Moreover, with an increasingly robust economy and high growth rates of India, it is not too far that scholars may start conceding the latter one not only as a beneficiary of the world's charity but also as a donor. This can be substantiated by the fact that it has discontinued its government to government development cooperation with all but six bilateral donors (DFID, EC, Germany, Japan, USAID, Russian Federation) (Chenoy & Chenoy, 2007: 3553).

India has also gradually been transformed from a recipient of aid to a giver of aid and for the first time it is in a position to provide direct cash transfers and subsidized loans. According to the Development Assistance Committee's estimates of aid, India disbursed over \$1.5 billion in traditional foreign aid in 2011, second only to China among developing country donors; however, it remained the world's largest recipient of multilateral assistance. With foreign aid by the five BRICS countries growing 10 times faster than aid by G-7 countries, Indian foreign assistance has not only tripled since the turn of the century but it has also grown in terms of the diversity of recipients.

In addition, there have been many institutional initiatives taken by the Indian establishment to enhance its foreign aid system. Such as India has recently announced that it would be creating its own aid agency and has set up an administrative structure, the "Development Partnership Administration," within its External Affairs Ministry toward that end, though there has not yet been any budgeted increase in the diplomatic corps (Mullen & Ganguly: 2012). Secondly, India Development Initiative (IDI) dedicates a \$1.5 billion soft credit fund over five years through the Exim Bank for supporting development projects mainly in Africa (Chenoy & Chenoy, 2007: 3553). Thirdly, India has also assisted Afghanistan in projects that range from roads to hospital building as a way of maintaining its influence in the region. Moreover, India has also extended more than \$100 million to Myanmar regime, including for the up gradation of their railway, becoming the latter's second largest market, absorbing 25% of the country's exports (ibid, 2007).

So, Indian foreign aids to other countries may, in due course of time, turn out to be its distinctive quality adding up to the very resources of the soft power formations. In fact, Li and Worm argue that there are always some country-specific soft power resources, such as the Japanese management philosophy and practice give Japan a unique source of soft power since it is unique and very different from the West. Similar case is that of the ancient Chinese military philosophy preserved in *The Art of War* which is still very influential in the world. (Li and Worm, 2010: 73). So, what management system is to Japan and ancient military philosophy to China's soft power, foreign aid is to India. Thus, India's foreign assistance definitely has potential to enhance India's soft power credentials.

However, India's aid policies, as Chenoy argues, also follow the intentions of the West in the creation of markets for Indian capital (Chenoy & Chenoy, 2007: 3553). Its assistance effort is clearly enmeshed into a larger set of foreign-policy goal of ensuring secure sources of energy for an expanding economy, opening markets for India's increasingly export-oriented industrial and service sectors, and bolstering geostrategic ties with key neighbours (Mullen & Ganguly, 2012: 2). But whatever India's intentions may be, with an increased foreign aid assistance also increases its influence in not only those countries but also amongst the other countries. In addition, it also projects a very positive image of India and demonstrates its commitment towards global development, despite its domestic financial obligations.

Development Model

Indian Developmental model, for some years now, has been strikingly successful in terms of growth and this could be a potent source of Indian soft power formation. Through its developmental model India has been successfully establishing a meaningful partnership with other leading democracies in the developing world, each a dominant actor on its own continent. India, Brazil and South Africa led IBSA group have eventually given the practical expression to the idea of South-South cooperation up to some extent. The emphasis on democratic kinship within this formation, which might be taken as a dig at China, should perhaps also be seen as an effort by India, a more explicit one than usual, to develop a "soft power" component to its diplomacy (Malone, 2011a: 298). The point to be noted here is that the Indian government often comes up with comprehensive and innovative development schemes and programmes but 'fails depressingly in terms of distribution' (ibid: 2011). This is why India's development model if at all lucrative, contributes only minutely to India's soft power.

International Institutions

India's active participation in almost all aspects of world affairs provides an enviable source of soft power formation. In fact, any country through its active participation in world affairs can set the tone of international politics which may add up to their soft power potentials. As Wang and Lu point out, a country's ability to frame the international agenda

and set the rules of the game is an important type of soft power (Li and Worm, 2010: 81). In this process, the ongoing convergence of ideas and interests with the other powerful blocks provides rare opportunities to India to rise through co-option and co-operation into institutions of global governance and great power status. (Wagner, 2010: 63).

Moreover, India's active participation in multilateral activity centred on democracy, for example, as an early contributor of \$10 million to the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) also adds up to its credibility as an potential soft power. In addition, India has been consistently backing up the various international institutions, like the Commonwealth (under the "Harare Declaration" of 1991) in restoring or improving democracy in countries experiencing internal challenges – for example, Cameroon and Fiji, has also worked as an important source for soft power formation (Malone, 2011b: 37).

Likewise, India has subscribed to major international human rights treaties (although not to those optional protocols that would allow its citizens to appeal at the international level when domestic avenues for redress prove fruitless). And India, much to its credit, volunteered to be amongst the first to undergo a peer review at the UN's new Human Rights Council in Geneva in April 2008, under a process known as Universal Periodic Review. As with any country, India's performance under the terms of various UN treaties and covenants raises questions, but, by and large, both official expert bodies consulted and national delegations have praised India's struggle to enshrine and respect a number of key human rights, while raising questions about a number of specific issues, including caste discrimination and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) (ibid).

India has also become part of many regional groupings, like India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA), Asia- Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), as a more direct way of promoting South-South Cooperation as well as establishing a stronger political and economic relationship (Chenoy and Chenoy, 2007: 3553). Such steps definitely strengthen India's standing as a soft power which is not ignorant of its neighbourhood and has an active involvement in shaping healthy relationships.

Moreover, the perpetual efforts of India to increase its formal role (as opposed to its substantive role) in the UN Security Council, and through greater voting rights in the IMF, are also a testimony to show the latter's agenda to enhance its soft power potential. India has a generally prudent policy stance in the various international institutions and this seems to be one of its greatest assets in attaining international recognition, as exemplified by the emergence of the G-20 at leader level in 2008, and India's prominent role of its leadership therein (Malone, 2011a: 284). On the financial fronts, India has performed very well as a part of its financial diplomatic manoeuvring within the forums such as the G20, the World Bank and the IMF through the constructive deliberations and negotiations over some of the pressing global challenges. India now also seems to be more committed to share the global burdens, such as the fight against climate change. India's involvement in Copenhagen exemplifies this when it took the initiative of 'thinking globally and acting locally without engaging in treaty making and binding international obligations' (Malone, 2011a: 301). Thus, with its concerted efforts by playing vital role in the various international forums, India looks forward to enhance its soft power.

International Image

A country's international image is shaped by the behaviours and performances of its government, multinational corporations, products and brand names, and of course people. A country's international image is very important when it comes to soft power. Obviously, if foreign people perceive a country's image as backward, poor, or uncivilized, then the country in question hardly has any soft power over foreign countries. In fact, by definition itself, soft power is a kind of power based on attraction and bad image certainly cannot generate attraction (Li and worm, 2010: 85).

However, India in its highly successful promotional campaign 'Incredible India!' tried to evoke the glamour of its past, the grandeur of its monuments, the glory of its colours, Himalayan peaks and other cultural and geographical legacy. India has also made a consistent efforts to superimpose on these characteristics international understanding of a more modern, private sector-driven country featuring fast growth, ground breaking service and high tech industries, and a 'can do' spirit among its young professionals and corporate leaders (Malone, 2011a: 299). Moreover India's recent announcement of a \$10 billion contribution to the IMF's \$430 billion financial corpus to help the debt-wracked 17-nation

Eurozone (*FirstPost Economy*, 2012) to protect the world economy from any further damage, enhances its image vis a vis soft power capability. So, such an effort is in the direction of portraying India's image as a strong economy capable of providing aid even to the so called 'wealthier' West in times of crisis gives fillip to its soft power.

The flipside of the coin, however, is that such above mentioned Indian steps to certain extent exudes of its desperation to be taken seriously as a growing power with stronger stakes in the world economy, which has drawn criticism from various sections. Critics point out to the dicey situation of the Indian economy at the domestic front with a sky high rate of inflation, and trying to help bail out other 'richer' nations in trouble, taking away from poorest of the poor to give to Eurozone. Such type of gimmicks seems to taint the shining lustrous image of India which the governmental machinery tries to imprint on the minds of foreign publics, thereby scrapping off India's soft power in bits and pieces.

Economic Aspects

A nation's economic progress also helps in the overall enhancement of the soft power because the promotion of good relations with foreign countries keeps a nation away from the external security threats, helps in maintaining peace and favourable environment for the overall pursuit of national agenda, particularly the national economic inputs (Rana, 2002: 362).

Economically, India has made extraordinary strides in recent years by becoming the world's fifth-largest economy in PPP (purchasing-power parity) terms (Tharoor, 2007). According to Goldman Sachs, the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) together could be larger than the G6 (US, Japan, UK, Germany, France and Italy) in less than 40 years (Li and Worm, 2010: 86). This outstanding performance was seen mainly due to a series of economic reforms under the pressure of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1991 which laid the basis for higher growth rates and helped to improve India's international position in the long term. The former inward-looking, closed, protected, and inefficient receiver of aid became, almost overnight became a seeker of foreign direct investment. Hence, today, discussions about Asia's rise are inspired not only by the economic miracles of China and South-East Asia but also by India's economic achievement since the 1990s. India's new position in the international economic order

corresponds with the aspirations of its foreign policy elite for great power status (Wagner, 2010a: 63). So, India's recent "pull" with its economic progress, unmatched to date in most of the neighbouring countries, has gained valuable currency in its overall agenda of becoming soft power at par with the other emerging economy. China's principal calling card has been its economic success, while India, on the other hand, has relied on a mix of constitutional, political, economic, and cultural assets (Malone, 2011b: 38). Thus, India's tremendous development on the economic front increased its attractiveness manifold and gave an impetus to its soft power wielding agenda.

ASSESSMENT OF CHANNELS AND INSTRUMENTS

Soft power is not always confined to its major resource components such as 'culture, ideals and policies' as mentioned earlier. There are always numerous structural components such as the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) etc. which are vital as instruments of wielding soft power. However, few authors like Tharoor claim that soft power is not merely a propaganda led by the government. In fact, wielding of soft power works efficiently only when it is least directed from the government hierarchical structure (Tharoor, 2007). Even Overdorf argues that soft power works best when it's not directed by the government at all (Overdorf, 2012: 2).

But in the wake of these, the role of the official government policy cannot be negated altogether. The official ventures of the government be it formal, economic or public/cultural, are all instrumental in exerting influence over other nations and hence enhancing soft power. Therefore, the channels of wielding soft power namely, formal, economic, and cultural diplomacies with formal diplomacy targeting the political elites, economic and public diplomacy targeting interest groups, and public diplomacy targeting the general public of another country, act synchronically in the soft power formation.

The complex dynamics of the interplay of the channels of soft power and the instruments vital in wielding it, to enhance overall influence, can be understood in a simple illustration which has already been discussed in chapter 1 (refer to page number 6).

GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS AND INSTRUMENTS FOR PROMOTING SOFT POWER

Ministry of External Affairs

The role of MEA in honing the soft power credentials of India is very crucial, since in a democracy the foreign ministry has the obligation of not only coordinating foreign relations with other states but also representing every other branch of the government in the external sphere (Rana, 2002: 362) and be the face of the society and people. The first exposure to the culture and people of a country that foreign publics get is through the institutionalized channels of communication as the MEA. MEA's role of transmitting information and educating the public at home as well as abroad is primary in exerting influence (ibid, 2002: 363).

The Division of Public Affairs in MEA takes care of the public interface role. The Coordination Division handles some correspondence with the public as well as matters that do not fall in the purview of other entities of the Ministry. The Policy Planning Division handles contact with the academic institutions and think tanks, providing grants and financial support to them on foreign affairs issues, seminars and the likes. The External Publicity (XP) Division currently also deals with some of the public interface and preparation of democracy material for public use (Rana, 2002: 363).

However, it is a well celebrated popular criticism of the working of MEA that India is not better understood abroad because of a failure in external publicity and in diplomacy. The governments themselves are unable to manage their own external image in other countries indicating that MEA itself has an image problem abroad. Rana finds that this up to some extent has something to do with the exaggerated popular expectations in a democracy too.

The Estimates Committee of the Parliament looked closely at external publicity work in its 45th and 51st reports and explains in the latter document published in April 1995 that:

“The Indian diplomatic machinery entrusted with the responsibility for information work in Missions/Posts Abroad needs to be restructured and revitalized with a view to enhancing positive coverage on India abroad and countering incorrect and distorted reportage and also misleading, false and dis-information campaigns carried out by certain countries against India” (Govt. Of India, 51st Report of Estimates Committee 1994-95).

Malone also comments critically on working of India’s MEA as overburdened Foreign Service which is, on average, of very high quality, but stretched so thin as its staff spends too much of its time conducting India’s international relations through narrow diplomatic channels, managing ministerial and other visits, negotiating memoranda of understanding of no great significance, and by other means that only a fraction of the rich reality of international relations today and of official Delhi’s actual international interests. In this the IFS resembles most of the world’s foreign services. More investment in this and in other instruments of Indian Foreign Policy is needed, but so is more thought on how best to use this high quality instrument (Malone, 2011a: 300).

Public diplomacy division of MEA

The official website of the Public Diplomacy Division of India’s Ministry of External Affairs, established in 2006, describes its objective as “to foster a greater understanding of India and its foreign policy concerns and to organise and support a broad range of outreach activities, both in India and overseas” (MEA Public Diplomacy Division, official website).

Since its establishment in 2006, the Public Diplomacy Division of the Ministry in fulfilment of its mandate, organised and participated in focused activities and programmes designed to stimulate interest in foreign policy issues and creating and fostering a greater awareness of India and India's foreign policy. The Division now has its own logo

and website www.indiandiplomacy.in. The target audience of the Public Diplomacy Division includes a wide cross-section ranging from the student community in colleges to experts in think-tanks. The Public Diplomacy Division produces various publications, books, periodicals, documentary films and other material that enables us to showcase the variegated facets of a nation as diverse as India. The Division has been successfully running its flagship monthly publication *India Perspectives* in 17 languages distributed across 160 countries (MEA Annual Report 2010-11: 156), through various diplomatic missions, and even having a web edition now. The publication has become quite popular as the magazine seeks to project India's rich cultural heritage, its composite pluralistic society as well as its vibrant economy. The Division partners with major domestic and international universities, think tanks and research organizations to organize seminars and conferences on subjects that are relevant to India's concerns; hosts delegations from various countries and organizations to provide them with a broad-based exposure to India and organizes lectures, seminars and other events within India with the objective of fostering a more informed discourse on the contemporary Indian foreign policy. It also services India's missions and posts around the world to enable them to project India more effectively and engage more and more with the diverse communities in India and overseas that have an interest in foreign policy as well as other issues related to India.

As a part of its outreach activities the Public Diplomacy Division has support the India Future of Change initiative (IFC) (MEA Public Diplomacy Division, official website) which is a five-year initiative that promises to take India to the world, and get students and professionals across geographies to compete, collaborate and co-create a better future. The division is actively involved in organising various contests that creates a synergy between the various actors involved and results in augmenting the interest in India but also its brand image around the world (MEA Public Diplomacy Division, official website).

Special initiatives to reach out to the youth through digital diplomacy efforts have yielded very encouraging results. The Division has taken few steps beyond the official discourse with other nations, described by few as sheer 'propaganda', and taken some serious and innovative steps in order to engage more and more individuals especially the youth. As an initiative in digital diplomacy PD Division started with an account on twitter, followed by Facebook and Youtube. The PD Division's Twitter account proved to be a useful tool in

successful evacuation of Indian nationals from Libya in February 2011. The Division's Twitter account (www.twitter.com/indiandiplomacy) has crossed 30,500 followers already and the Facebook account (www.facebook.com/indiandiplomacy) has around 44,500 plus followers, with many hailing from the neighbouring South Asian, South East and West Asian countries. These social media initiatives enhanced the outreach of the PD Division manifold (MEA Annual Report 2010-11: 155).

However, as Overdorf argues, the initiative of India's "public diplomacy" wing to branch out into social media with a false hope that its Facebook friends and twitter followers would do for the government, what the government couldn't do itself would be a very wrong notion to bank upon. Overdorf finds it to be a desperate but failed attempt of the government to control the message that is emanated to the masses (Overdorf, 2012).

Indian Council of Cultural Relations

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is the cultural diplomacy agency of India which seeks to present a favourable image of India abroad, mainly to counter its stereotypical image (Mark, 2008: 181), and partly to cater to the domestic objectives of preserving its cultural heritage. Established in 1950, it has served as the 'prime, but not exclusive, channel for official activities abroad' (Rana, 2002: 150). The ICCR has had the primary responsibility for India's cultural diplomacy since the organisation's establishment in 1950.

It is one of the number of national cultural and educational institutions established as part of a post Independence programme of nation-building that owed much to Jawaharlal Nehru and his fellow nationalist leader, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. In fact he could rather be called the Father of ICCR, who extended his progressive thinking to the realm of international relations too and inspired its activities right from the outset.

There are four objectives set for the ICCR which are quite important in the overall India's soft power formation. Firstly, it participates in the formulation and

implementation of policies and programmes relating to India's external cultural relations; secondly, it promotes cultural exchange with other countries and peoples; thirdly it strengthens cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries; and fourthly it establishes and develops relations with national and international organisations in the field of culture. These all functions, one way or other, seem to strengthen India's soft power situation. Because the organisation in question has certainly played a role in the 'formulation and implementation of policies and programmes relating to India's external cultural relations,' and has, through its support of scholarships (one of its most funded activities), delegations, seminars, exhibitions and cultural performances, continued to 'promote cultural exchange with other countries and peoples.' (Mark, 2008: 189)

In addition, two major components of work of ICCR are the organization and coordination of international students studying in India and the cultural centre network. Other activities of the same involve organizing various festivals of India abroad, visits to and from India of distinguished scholars, intellectuals, academics and artists; cultural group performances, exhibitions, seminars and conferences; establishing and maintaining professorships and chairs for Indian universities abroad.

Moreover, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations is also formally set up with the objectives of establishing, reviving and strengthening cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries. Its aims, as enunciated in the Memorandum of Association, are:

- To participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes relating to India's external cultural relations;
- To promote cultural exchanges with other countries and peoples;
- To promote and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries; and
- To establish and develop relations with national and international organizations in the field of culture. The Council has worked steadily to attain these objectives. (MEA Annual Report, 2011-12)

Other major activities of the Council are, administration of scholarship schemes for overseas students on behalf of the Government of India and other agencies,

welfare of international students; grant of scholarships to foreign students to learn Indian dance and music; exchange of exhibitions; organisation of and participation in international seminars and symposia; participation in major cultural festivals abroad; organisation of 'Festival of India' in countries abroad; exchange of groups of performing artistes; organisation of lecture-demonstration by performing artistes abroad; Distinguished Visitors Programme under which eminent personalities from abroad are invited to visit India, and the outgoing visitor's programme in which experts are sent abroad for delivering lectures, presentation of books, audio-visual material, art objects and musical instruments to institutions abroad; providing the secretariat for the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding; organisation of the annual Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture, conducting Maulana Azad Essay Competition; publication of books and journals for distribution in India and abroad; maintaining Indian Cultural Centres abroad; maintaining a well stocked library and the manuscripts of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad; and digitisation of rare manuscripts.

Initially, the ICCR was located administratively within the Department of Culture; a location which well suited Azad's ideas on the role that culture had played in the making of India, and on the importance of cultural cooperation for world peace. However, in 1960, the administrative location of the ICCR was transferred to India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). This move in a way represented a 'shift of ideology' because the organisation's new link to the MEA ensured the strong backing of Indian embassies for its work and the focus of the ICCR became much more closely aligned to the pursuit of diplomacy. The ICCR's funding has been provided through the MEA, and the ICCR's governing body has always included the foreign secretary (ex officio) and the MEA's financial advisor, as well as the director-general. Though the ICCR is not functionally autonomous, it plays 'very important role' in the furtherance of India's foreign policy objectives (Mark, 2008: 192).

Moreover, following the reforms of 1991, the ICCR has also began to place more emphasis on working to enhance the achievement of national economic interests such as increased trade and tourism. The Indian Ministry of Tourism, for instance, in 2004 launched an award-winning advertising campaign - *Incredible India* - to take advantage of India's extraordinary tourism potential (ibid, 2008: 194). In 2004 the Centre, in conjunction with the Indian Ministry of Tourism, launched a series of tourism-related seminars focused around the *Incredible India* campaign (ibid, 2008: 196).

However, there are many working lacunae within and outside of the sphere of ICCR which need to be corrected for its smooth and efficient functioning. The lack of autonomy for the ICCR has always created a hurdle in its functioning. Its complete independence from other governmental department would benefit it in a number of ways. It would give the ICCR more flexibility, would counter claims that the ICCR was nothing more than a propaganda instrument of the government of India, and hence would confer on it greater credibility without being 'branded as propagandist.' With its autonomous status, the ICCR would be able to 'deal with, for instance, a large number of individuals/institutions who would otherwise shy away from being involved directly with a Government Ministry/Department' (ibid, 2008:188).

So, the working of the ICCR is hampered due the lack of independence in decision making. In a study led by the Standing Committee on External Affairs Committee where the Committee gave a low opinion regarding the MEA's management of the ICCR, and of the ICCR's work, and its lack of dynamism, planning, innovation and flexibility. The Committee notes that the ICCR's approach to cultural diplomacy was 'conventional and unprofessional and as such, the ICCR was not able to go beyond propagating the stereotyped image' of India. (ibid, 2008:188)

There is also lack of clarity in the working spheres of the ICCR and various other departments. Quite often, one department negotiates the agreements, another (the MEA, through the ICCR) carries out cultural diplomacy under the agreements - has remained a source of irritation between the two for many years. (ibid, 2008:199) In the 1996-1997 report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs, the Committee said that it had considered the question of whether the ICCR, rather than the Department of Culture, should be the 'nodal agency' for all international cultural exchanges.' The MEA noted that there would be some advantages in having the ICCR made the nodal agency in order to ensure 'better coordination and implementation'(ibid, 2008:200). The Committee also criticised the ICCR's lack of focus on contemporary art, and its failure to take advantage of the popularity of Indian films.

Apart from the various criticism of the Standing Committee on External Affairs, the ICCR is also criticised for its style and content of the programme. Moreover, the

ICCR is also accused of pandering to political influence with its regional bias towards certain regions of the country. A general criticism of the ICCR's programme is also that it has failed to reflect the contemporary dynamism of India, and that it is in essence, boring. ((ibid, 2008:202)

SEMI OR NON –GOVERNMENTAL INSTRUMENTS OF WEILDING SOFT POWER

India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF)

Branding can also work hand in hand with other means of soft power creation for a country. As India today has been increasingly indulging in extensive use of various nation branding tactics as propagating logos and slogans, its advertisements can be seen in leading international TV channels, sponsored pages in leading international magazines; e-marketing, web portals; press tours, brochures, pseudo events etc. (Szondi, 2008: 18).

In 2003, the government of India became serious about using a national brand for India, and because India's national brand programme was so new, it was to be expected that the ICCR's cultural diplomacy lacked a connection to such a brand. Although the India Brand Equity Fund (IBEF) of Rs5 billion was established under India's commerce ministry in 1996 (in Rana's estimation, this sum was equivalent to US\$130 million in 1996 dollars⁷⁴¹), it was not until 2003 that the initiative gained much traction. In that year, the IBEF was revamped. A private sector national body, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) was appointed responsible for the fund's operational management. The Ministry of Commerce remained responsible for the IBEF's oversight. The new IBEF was set the objective of building 'positive economic perceptions of India globally.' The then Minister of Commerce and Industry, Arun Jaitley, (ibid, 2008:197) writing about the launch of the new IBEF, noted that it was not an easy task building positive economic perceptions of India abroad because 'perceptions are tough to change...as India opens to the world, we realise that a strong image and perception of an erstwhile India lingers on.' But because of the 'positive emergent reality of India' it was worth the effort of trying to 'break stereotypes' internationally (ibid, 2008:197). The first steps of the revamped entity were to 'undertake intensive research and dialogue within India to determine its approach and strategy,' and to launch the IBEF's

website. The website's focus is on providing good news stories about India's economic performance and potential. The IBEF's catch phrase is 'India: fastest growing free market democracy.' The 'good news' stories set out on the IBEF website included aspects of culture, with a clear focus on the earnings of the most successful Indian films screened abroad, along with some mention of the growth in popularity internationally of aspects of Indian culture, including its cuisine, music and art. But despite this cultural aspect of the IBEF, there has not been any linkage between India's cultural diplomacy and its brand. (Mark, 2008: 196)

India Future for Change Initiative (IFC)

This initiative is again a public-private partnership endeavour which provides a platform for all public and private partners and stakeholders of Brand India to bring awareness of India among the future generations, all over the world. It's an initiative taken by the Public Diplomacy Division of the MEA in collaboration with a Delhi-based communication strategy and design firm named 'The Idea Works', which has conceived and developed the India: Future of Change initiative. This initiative works towards bringing together Indian concerns and global interests by reaching mainly to the youth across campuses. The main focus of the firm has been on public diplomacy initiatives, especially for 'Brand India' activities in Asia and Europe. 'The Idea Works' is notable projects it has earlier undertaken as the '*UK Creating Tomorrow*' - a public diplomacy initiative of the British High Commission in India; '*Bonjour India*' - the festival of France in India; and the '*IncredibleIndia@60*' campaign and '*India Everywhere*' campaigns (India Future of Change Initiative, official website).

The contemporary fusion music band 'Indian Ocean' are the official brand ambassador for this initiative. The knowledge partners of the initiative include, the Industrial Design Centre (IDC) at IIT-B, which lends its expertise on IFC Design and Poster Design Contest. Its distinguished faculty comes on board for formulating evaluation and short-listing systems along with process outlining and archiving for the entire contest. Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE), set up by IIM-A is also the knowledge partner to the IFC Business Contest. They come on board to formulate and regulate contest procedures and as advisors for the main event guest list and jury short-listing. A prominent British international business daily, The Financial Times, also supports IFC's Essay Contest

(ibid). IFC is an initiative, one of its kind, that aspires to generate greater awareness of the emergent reality in India and provides opportunities to policy, enterprise and culture initiatives across the world.

NGO's

The NGOs today are the voice of public conscience and have become a powerful voice of civil society (Rana, 2002: 367). The role of non state actors in public diplomacy, hence soft power, is increasing incrementally. The extent to which the government is visible and recognisable as the sponsor, initiator or source of communication may vary from campaign to campaign or from country to country. The government's role in communicating with foreign publics is crucial as foreign policy priorities can change with the change of government and public diplomacy can easily boil down to promoting a government (and its foreign policy abroad) rather than promoting the country and its interests. An interesting trend is that while in public diplomacy the visibility and role of government is decreasing, giving ways to more credible actors, such as NGOs and other non state actors, nation branding practitioners call for more government involvement to achieve co-ordination and a holistic approach. A global survey named Edelman Trustbarometer in 2008 made an annual study of leaders in 18 countries from 4 continents to conclusively confirm that NGO's and businesses are more trusted than messages from media and governments, which has an important bearing on the credibility of the message originators (Szondi, 2009: 12).

In addition, Amnesty too has now been well established as one of the most active NGOs on human rights with ample international acclaim and credibility in the field and this has helped US enhancing its soft power up to a great extent by projecting the former as a saviour and protector of human rights all over. But India on the contrary does not seem to have any such organizations of similar stature and credibility to be working internationally other than in the region of south and south East Asia.

Conclusion

Thus, to sum up, it can be stated that having discussed resources of soft power of India elaborately, it is well understood that India is abundant in soft power resources, and

there is ample machinery set up by the government to instrumentalize these resources into soft power potential. However, the fault line lies in the lack of synchronization in the working of these various institutions. Eg. Culture department negotiates various cultural agreements with other countries but its implementation is in the hands of MEA via ICCR, wherein ICCR gets stuck in the middle. Its lack of autonomy to carry out activities on its own is a peril in itself. Moreover, the governments' 'conventional and unprofessional' outlook on the issue of enhancing soft power also serves as a deterrent. However, the role played by initiatives like IBEF are immensely contributing to enhance India's soft power and cultivating a positive image globally.

Chapter 4

A Comparative Perspective on Indian Soft power: An Interstate Analysis

Introduction

Having discussed at length about various dimensions of India's soft power, including an analysis on the fissures and lapses within the domestic machinery and structures, this chapter would focus on India's standing as a soft power on the international canvass. To carry out the comparative analysis it is pertinent to analyse soft power methodologically. Soft power, from a methodological perspective, is a relative and intangible concept difficult to be quantified. The relational nature of soft power, where the perceptions of one country might vary substantially from another, makes cross-national comparisons difficult (Ernst & Young, 2012: 6). However, the likes of Jonathan McClory, a researcher in the Institute of Government (UK) and private consultant services like Ernst & Young in collaboration with the Skolkovo Institute for Emerging Market Studies have been successful in developing soft power indices of various countries only as early as 2007. Even Chicago Council of Global Affairs had come up with a soft power survey earlier in 2008 but had a limited purview since it included only major Asian countries. These surveys have been able to provide a fairly good analysis of relative soft power credentials of various countries including India.

Despite the relational nature of soft power and large number of differences on various points amongst the countries, there can still be drawn some similar attributes and qualities for which most nations share a universal understanding and appreciation. Hence, the surveys (Ernst & Young in particular) combine a wide range of indicators that capture the overall soft power capabilities across nation states (ibid, 2012: 6). Keeping these surveys at the helm of analysis, this chapter would attempt to analyse India's soft power standing in

comparison to the other countries which have performed better according to the soft power indices laid down in these surveys. After all, the assertion that India is a 'soft power by default' (Wagner, 2010b:), cannot be validated without acquiring a comparative perspective on India's standing as a soft power and zero down on key areas where India lags behind and what are the lessons that it could learn from the other states.

Soft Power Variables

For the better understanding of the nature of soft power and the ways through which countries accumulate it over time, it is pertinent to analyse it in terms of the variables that define soft power. In this manner, the variables of soft power can be organized into three major categories: global image, global integrity and global integration (Ernst & Young, 2012: 7).

The variable of *Global integration* of soft power is an important variable which measures a countries' soft power credential in terms of the level of immigration, tourism, English fluency and university rankings. It depicts the interconnectedness and communication of a country with the rest of the world and bases this on the number of people who come to visit, study or live in the country. These are the key components behind a country's connectivity with and subsequent ability to wield influence.

Secondly, *Global integrity* part of variable is measured through the freedom index, voter turnout, rule of law and CO2 emission levels of a country. Integrity is a major aspect that not only generates respect but also accumulates soft power, and this is measured by the fact that how much a country adheres to an ethical or moral code. The world respects countries that protect their citizens' rights, uphold political and social freedoms, empower their people and treat their neighbours with respect.

Thirdly, *Global image* consists of the number of its citizens who are global icons as in *TIME 100*, media exports, the number of its companies that are globally admired, performance in the Olympics and popularity of its language indicated by number of language enrolments. The variable of global image is an estimate of a country's global popularity and admiration, especially that of its culture. Countries possessing more global admiration have

far more soft power influence in the world. These variables can be understood in a simple illustration below: (ibid: 7).

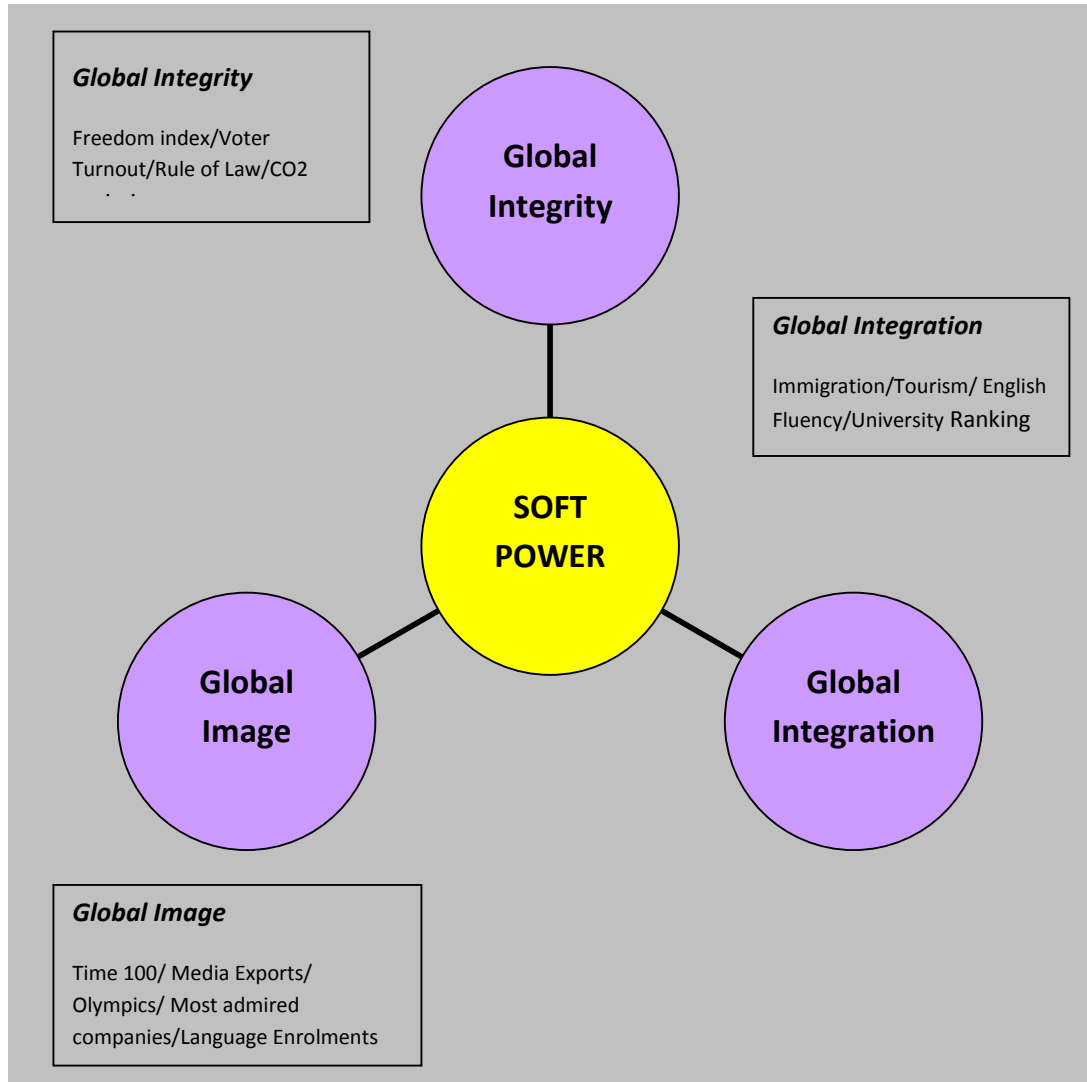


Fig. 4.1: Categories of Soft Power Variables

Source: Ernst & Young Soft Power Index, 2012

Where Does India Stand

Depending upon approximately the 13 variables or components of soft power discussed earlier, the study would focus on India's international standing as a soft power as

well as also analyse what is the contribution of these variables individually to the overall soft power strength of India. In a comparison between the ‘soft power indices’ of Emerging Markets with the much developed G7 countries (see Table 1 below), we find that US, China, Japan, Canada and certain European countries all rate higher than India. McClory however, points out that size, be it population, economy, or military, are not sufficient to score high on soft power indices. However, though the index provides an assessment of relative soft power strength, there are inherent risks in extrapolating too much from the results (McClory, 2010: 7).

India’s Position globally in comparison to Developed nations (mainly G7)

From the table given below we see that India’s Soft power has invariably ranged between 26.7 (highest in 2008) and 20.4 (lowest in 2010) in 2005 to 2010. What is noteworthy at this juncture is that India is about 10 points lesser than China on an average, which is quite a significant difference. However, what is worth noting here is the striking difference of about 35-37 points between US (1st) and France (2nd). This huge margin between the two raises a question that what gives that extra edge to US over all the other countries? Is there any inherent bias in measuring the soft power indices? It needs further research.

Table 4a						
The Top Soft Powers						
Country	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
US	84.0	85.5	86.3	88.1	87.0	87.0
France	49.7	48.4	50.3	49.6	49.6	49.5
Germany	44.0	46.6	46.6	45.8	44.0	43.2
United Kingdom	46.0	45.9	46.3	46.0	46.7	43.0
Canada	36.0	39.4	38.6	36.8	35.3	39.0
Italy	33.0	34.6	33.9	34.6	34.2	32.0
Japan	36.9	36.5	35.4	34.7	32.5	31.8
China	31.1	32.2	32.2	32.2	33.7	30.7
India	22.6	21.5	21.9	26.7	22.6	20.4
Russia	22.9	18.4	22.9	21.0	23.5	18.0
Brazil	5.9	6.0	9.3	12.7	9.7	13.8

Turkey	10.3	12.5	11.4	14.4	10.3	12.9
Mexico	10.0	11.8	11.8	17.1	19.3	11.5
South Africa	13.0	10.0	8.5	12.6	11.8	10.3

Source: Ernst & Young Soft Power Index, 2012

India's position in comparison to Emerging Markets

Now coming on to India's position in comparison to Emerging Markets (see Table 2 below), India is second only to China, with a gap of about 10 points on an average from 2005 to 2010. A notable point however is that India's soft power index fell sharply to 20.4 in 2010 after peaking at 26.7 earlier in 2008. Its a huge decline considering the fact that India is an EM economy. Figures substantiate that poor performance in categories of Rule of law, Voter turnout and University Ranking are responsible for the decline. However, amongst what Ernst & Young differentiate as Emerging Markets (see table below), India ranks 2nd in the soft power index which, if not an outstanding achievement, is worth some appreciation. It's a relief to note that it ranks much higher to the rest of the emerging economies as Russia, Brazil, Turkey, Mexico, South Africa etc. It is second only to China. The BRICS countries are seen to be holding the topmost rungs on the ladder of relative soft power strengths, bagging a position in the top seven ranks, which is a laudable achievement.

<u>Emerging Markets' Soft Power Index</u>							
Rank	Country	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	China	31.1	32.2	32.2	32.2	33.7	30.7
2	India	22.6	21.5	21.9	26.7	22.6	20.4
3	Russia	22.9	18.4	22.9	21.0	23.5	18.0
4	Brazil	5.9	6.0	9.3	12.7	9.7	13.8
5	Turkey	10.3	12.5	11.4	14.4	10.3	12.9
6	Mexico	10.0	11.8	11.8	17.1	19.3	11.5
7	South Africa	13.0	10.0	8.5	12.6	11.8	10.3
8	Hungary	12.2	11.1	7.4	9.2	9.2	10.0

9	Czech Republic	8.5	9.2	9.2	9.2	10.7	9.6
10	Slovakia	7.0	7.4	6.6	6.6	7.0	9.2

Source: Ernst & Young Soft Power Index, 2012

Individual contribution of various factors in India's Overall Soft Power

But what contributes to India's soft power on the whole? What are its various components/ indicators and what is their individual contribution? For an answer to this question consider Table 3 given below:

Table 4c						
India's Overall Soft Power Index						
Category	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
ESL	16.8%	17.3%	17.1%	15.4%	16.8%	17.7%
TIME 100	6.7%	5.2%	13.7%	15.4%	10.1%	17.7%
Rule of law	17.3%	17.7%	17.5%	15.8%	17.3%	15.6%
Freedom	13.5%	13.8%	13.7%	12.3%	13.5%	14.1%
Immigration	12.3%	12.7%	12.5%	11.3%	12.3%	13.0%
CO2	6.7%	6.9%	6.8%	6.2%	6.7%	7.1%
Voter turnout	10.1%	10.4%	10.3%	9.2%	6.7%	5.3%
Media exports	2.5%	1.7%	1.7%	1.5%	2.5%	2.7%
Tourism	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	4.5%	4.9%	2.6%
Admired co.	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	2.3%	2.5%	2.6%
Olympics	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%
Language	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%
University	9.9%	10.1%	0.0%	4.5%	4.9%	0.0%

Source: Ernst & Young Soft Power Index, 2012

As figures reveal, India ranked second in soft power in 2010, although it has been trading second place with Russia on and off since 2005 (Table 1 & Table 2). The knowledge of English is one of India's two highest-ranking contributors which does not come

as a surprise, giving the large Indian diaspora community living in the West an unparalleled advantage. Indians abroad are well known for their fluency in English. The second-highest contribution is from the *TIME* 100 list, which has been dominated by prominent Indian businessmen, and given India's economic boom since the 1990s, this also does not surprise much. In addition, India performed relatively high in the Rule of law, Freedom index and Immigration categories. India still ranks above average in Rule of law, but this variable has recently dropped considerably, given the inherent corruption in the governmental and bureaucratic structure. Bollywood's exports to the large Indian expatriate community have been a saving grace and helped India score above average in royalties. A category in which India fared relatively poorly is Voter turnout, even though voter participation is generally quite high in state and local elections. This does not lie in sync with the fact that India boasts of being one of the largest democracies in the world. Interestingly, India scored relatively poorly in its University rankings as well. While the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) are global brands whose graduates are in a way brand ambassadors of India, the majority of its universities remain poorly funded, produce little research and attract few international students. This should be a wakeup call to the Indian government on the standard of education it provides.

Despite its massive size and population, India does not attract many tourists, mainly because of its poor infrastructure, shortage of trained resources and excessive formalities for visiting various locales. India also has never put many resources behind its Olympic athletics having only counted few medals in its bag till date. Moreover, its major language, Hindi, is not well studied throughout the world. India also scores below average on Most admired companies, which comes as a surprise. Its private service-oriented companies have attracted more attention in recent years. While the above factors weaken India's global soft power, a continuous and robust economic growth over time seems to eventually overcome this flaw.

Having assessed India's position globally as well as on various individual parameters, the study would now focus on individual soft power credentials of various countries and then compare and contrast that with India, zeroing down on the points where India can draw lessons from their structural or institutional framework.

I. United States

US, being the progenitor of the much celebrated concept of soft power, has itself had a long standing history of possessing immense soft power. The indices seen in the tables previously show that US even today tops the charts. Nye, in the preface to *Soft Power-Means to Success in World Politics* itself explains about the influence that the US soft power exerted on the rest of the world,

“Think of the impact of Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms in Europe at the end of World War II; of young people behind the Iron Curtain listening to American music and news on Radio Free Europe; of Chinese students symbolizing their protests in Tiananmen Square by creating a replica of the Statue of Liberty; of newly liberated Afghans in 2001 asking for a copy of the Bill of Rights; of young Iranians today surreptitiously watching banned American videos and satellite television broadcasts in the privacy of their homes.”(Nye, 2004)

In fact, as a direct result of the world wanting to replicate and follow American ‘culture, institutions and values’, the post-World War II movement toward free trade and democracy was initiated (Ernst & Young, 2012: 9).

But as a matter of fact, even the largest of all empires haven’t been invincible or infallible. US soft power also has its limitations and the extent of its boundaries of influence have indeed come under the scanner now. According to many close observers, America's attractiveness is in a constant decline in the regions where the allure, or "soft power," of others has increased (Nye, 2005: 1) For example, in Asia and Africa, China’s growing influence has definitely eroded some of US soft power too. The U.S. Government’s National Intelligence Council itself projected in 2008 that U.S. dominance in the world would be “much diminished” by 2025 and that the only component that would help in sustaining American superiority would be its military prowess (Nye, 2009: 1). The poor performance of Wall Street institutions and Washington regulators has cost New York a good deal in terms of its soft power, or the attractiveness of its economic model (Nye, 2010c: 143-44).

A case can be made that soft power has not nurtured positive appreciations for the US but has even been counterproductive, generating anti-American reactions. For example, East Asia (except Japan and Taiwan) is apprehensive about the consumption of US-

made forms of entertainment and other vectors of Western 'liberal' values as liberal individualism which would contaminate the Asian cultural sphere. Especially in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, it is believed that this would mar the traditional values that it proudly upholds and also undermine local social inclusion. More so, in places where American material culture and fashion-styles are extremely popular as South Korea and Indonesia, youngsters' anti-American demonstrations are a very common prevalent sight (Otmazgin, 2008: 78). And this does not stop just in Asia, but the anti-American wave can be felt even in the most distant of the places on the globe. America's too much insistence of using hard military power, be it in the name of 'just war' against terrorism or propagating democratic ideals or active involvement in NATO's activities, certainly has contributed immensely in eroding its soft power, and branding 'Uncle Sam' with an image of the big bad bully around the block. The cases of Afghanistan, Iraq and now Iran themselves exemplify how US has been constantly losing on friends and brewing foes for itself.

On the issue of comparison of various emerging powers with the US, Nye comments that in today's information-based world of cyber-insecurity, 'power transition' is not as great a threat as power diffusion. In fact the premonitions of China, India, or Brazil surpassing and outshining the U.S. in the coming decades, would relegate into the background considering that the rise of modern barbarians or non-state actors is a bigger problem than the classical transition of power among great states and toppling of US from a great power stature (Nye, 2009: 1).

Anecdotally, one would have expected the past six years to have taken their toll on US soft power. The US has been accused of being the harbinger of the recent global financial crisis, giving rise to suspicion on the performance of Wall Street institutions. However, the data does not support this case, as seen in table no. 2 already given above. The US scored 87 in 2010, a full 37 points ahead of second place France and an enormous 56 points over China. The US has gained a net three points in soft power since 2005, although it has lost a little ground since 2008. These results clearly indicate that the US remains totally dominant and undisputed worldwide in soft power. The US and European figures also corroborate soft power's durability. Once accumulated by a country, soft power has staying power (Ernst & Young, 2012: 14). How US performed on individual variables of soft can be seen in the table below:

Table 4d						
<u>United States</u>						
Category	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Immigration	13.1%	12.9%	12.8%	12.5%	12.6%	12.6%
University	13.1%	12.9%	12.8%	12.5%	12.6%	12.6%
Admired co.	13.1%	12.9%	12.8%	12.5%	12.6%	12.6%
Rule of law	9.2%	10.3%	10.2%	11.2%	10.1%	10.1%
Tourism	9.2%	9.0%	8.9%	10.0%	10.1%	10.1%
Freedom	8.9%	8.8%	8.7%	8.5%	8.6%	8.6%
TIME 100	8.9%	8.8%	8.7%	8.5%	8.6%	8.6%
ESL	8.9%	8.8%	8.7%	8.5%	8.6%	8.6%
Media exports	4.5%	4.4%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
Olympics	4.5%	3.9%	3.9%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
Language	4.5%	4.4%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
Voter turnout	1.8%	2.6%	3.5%	2.6%	2.6%	2.6%
CO2	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%

Source: Ernst & Young Soft Power Index, 2012

What then is responsible for US dominance in gaining immensely from soft power since decades and what has India got to learn from this case is an important question? Lessons India can learn from US are that just as the US champions certain universal values and ideals as human rights and democracy, India does not represent any such ideals. This if not erode, at least does not add to India's soft power standing (Lam, 2007: 358). It has quite often been accused of being inadvertent towards the lapses in its democratic institutions and ideals, and also been found indulged in committing a lot of human rights violations in its strife torn areas like Kashmir and North- East. However, India definitely has an advantage over US soft power in the sense that it does not partake in military endeavours on the size and scale of the US and does not try to enforce its values as aggressively as the US. Although, it did make mistakes in the past as in the case of Sri Lanka, yet India's overall image of being a soft power advocate has not tarnished. Another lesson that India could draw is, learning from

the blunders the US made by being ‘hypocritical’ in formulating its domestic policies. As Nye succinctly puts it, “Government policies can reinforce or squander a country's soft power and domestic or foreign policies that appear to be hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to the opinion of others, or based on a narrow approach to national interests” (Nye, 2004: 14) can irreversibly undercut soft power and this is exactly what happened with the US, as in the case of Iraq in 2003 (and presently Iran). People developed resentment not towards the US in general but against the Bush administration and its dubious policies. Due to its policies (foreign and domestic) of professing one thing and doing something else, it lost its credibility in general and although ‘the public in most nations continued to admire the United States for its technology, music, movies, and television’ yet majority of people in most countries said they ‘disliked the growing influence of America in their country’ (ibid, 2004: 14). So the message to be learnt for India from this situation could be that it should try and be as fair and transparent as it can in formulation and implementation of its policies, domestic as well as foreign, so that it does not have to face the perils that US had to face at the end.

II. Canada

Canada is one of the most loved nations amongst masses and its reputation is overwhelmingly positive. In a study carried out worldwide by Future Brand in 2011, including 113 countries and 3500 respondents, (a subsidiary of US advertising giant McCann Erickson) Canada held second position in the “national brand” strength, when the respondents were asked their impressions of 113 nations in question. Basing the rankings on parameters as ‘quality of life’, ‘value system’, ‘good for business’ etc, Canada beat even high scorers like Switzerland and New Zealand, bagging the top slot (White, 2012: 1). In fact, a Gallup poll of 259 thousand people in 135 countries, declared Canada to be the ‘most favoured nation to live in’ and topped the list also in terms of having most number of highly-educated people over the age of 24 (ibid, 2012). In other words, Canada’s attractiveness caters to the interests of not only the masses, but also to the cultural and economic elites who shape policies worldwide. What then is the reason for Canada’s such huge popularity amongst the masses? Canada is strong on soft diplomacy. Canada's history of eager participation in international fora has helped bolster its reputation, and has a strong record of peacekeeping, and a largely balanced, peaceful foreign policy (McGrath, 2010: 1). It has won accolades for peaceful mediation in many international conflicts for it has been designated with the status of a quintessential ‘middle power’ (along with Norway). This has

actually turned out to be its USP today. Canada has never been a strong advocate of military power since the 1940s and today is exerting global diplomatic influence rather than military. In 1943, an article in *The Economist* made the explicit assumption, in a pre WW2 world division of states into two tiers of states i.e. great and small, that Canada deserved a category of its own, as a country of only eleven and a half million people which had, at that stage, managed to raise the fourth largest air force and third largest navy in the world (White, 2012: 1). Professor David Carment of Carleton University also states that 'values-based soft power' has proven a success, as evidenced by global receptiveness to the 'responsibility to protect' doctrine, produced by the Canadian government-sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty in 2001 (ibid, 2012). But its 'soft' image got enhanced even further ever since it adopted the policy of giving up its nuclear weapons programme.

Canada gains the middle power perks and privileges via methods as membership on international bodies. For example, Canada has been elected roughly once a decade to a seat on the UN Security Council. The Canadian Prime Minister won the Nobel peace prize in 1957 for peacefully mediating the Suez Crisis, by sending a police force which later evolved into the present day UN peacekeeping troops. Canada advances adamantly the agenda of human security which helps build trust and goodwill, as seen in the 'Responsibility to Protect' concept which emerged from a 2001 report sponsored by the Canadian government (ibid, 2012).

Despite these achievements on the axes like education, quality of life etc., the country still lacks certain tools of soft power which are available to other developed states as the US, for example, produces a large proportion of the world's popular culture. Canada doesn't make quite as big a cultural contribution as it could. The UK runs the BBC World service, which is a truly international network, unlike Canada's CBC. The CBC could easily be an alternative international voice to the BBC but it's not. France operates the 'Alliance Française' network of cultural institutes (White, 2012).

But what India can learn from Canada's soft power behaviour is that how Canada with its soft diplomacy/ niche diplomacy has earned such a sterling reputation. However, what curtails Canada's soft power is the fact that whatever it does on the world stage is still refracted through the prism of the US (White: 2012). There seems to be a

similarity with India here, which also is generally perceived on various international fora in unison with Pakistan and their entities as being symbiotic. Another testament to a highly-successful Canadian programme of outreach is the recent incident of a Canadian ambassador to China putting up pictures of his simple car, showcasing a very modest lifestyle, which sparked a debate amongst the Chinese citizens on the lavish lifestyle of their bureaucrats and diplomats, pointing towards the prevalent corruption within the Chinese government (Bland, 2012).

But according to McGrath Canada’s problem lies in the fact that it is just very content with its lot. While it threw considerable resources at Afghanistan and was a key player in Haiti, it could have gone much further with the latter, even over the issue of Arctic sovereignty again it should try and take a lead. On climate change Canada already is one of the most notable holdouts, and in G20 it voted against a global bank tax., but where it lacks is that the current government is not that keen on cultural funding (McGrath, 2010) which a problem for the Indian cultural institutions too as already discussed in chapter 3. The ranking of Canada, is built by looking at a number of indicators of how well it performs internationally, including things like Olympic performance and media exports, like film and music. The various Canadian indicators of soft power can be assessed below in Table 5:

Table 4e						
<u>CANADA</u>						
Category	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rule of law	24.4%	25.1%	25.6%	26.9%	28.1%	25.4%
Freedom	20.8%	19.0%	19.4%	20.4%	21.3%	19.2%
Voter turnout	12.5%	9.5%	9.7%	10.2%	10.6%	9.6%
CO2	9.4%	8.6%	8.7%	9.2%	10.6%	9.6%
Tourism	9.2%	8.4%	8.5%	9.0%	6.2%	8.5%
Olympics	1.0%	8.6%	8.7%	2.0%	2.1%	6.7%
Immigration	6.1%	5.6%	5.7%	6.0%	6.2%	5.6%
University	6.1%	5.6%	5.7%	6.0%	6.2%	5.6%
Admired co.	3.1%	2.8%	2.8%	3.0%	3.1%	2.8%
ESL	2.8%	2.5%	2.6%	2.7%	2.8%	2.6%
TIME 100	2.1%	1.9%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	1.9%
Language	1.6%	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%

Media exports	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.0%
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Source: Ernst & Young Soft Power Index, 2012

III. Japan

Joseph Nye himself finds that Japan has more potential soft-power resources than any other Asian country (Nye, 2005). Today Japan ranks highest in most of the development indices in Asia, there seems to be a global fascination with ‘cool Japan’ or ‘Gross National Cool’³(Kingston, 2009). Japan's reputation was tarnished by the decade-long economic slowdown of the 1990s but it still kept producing potential soft-power resources. Its global cultural influence grew in areas ranging from fashion, food and pop music to consumer electronics, architecture and art (Nye, 2005).

It possesses the world's third largest national economy, sophisticated industries, and the best-equipped conventional military forces among Asian countries (Nye, 2010). It retains not only a high standard of living and a stable society, but also a highly skilled labour force, and areas of technological and manufacturing leadership. Moreover, its culture (both traditional and popular), overseas development assistance, and support of international institutions provide resources for soft, or attractive, power (Nye, 2010). Japan is not only a successful economic model and a heavyweight industrial giant, constantly producing and exporting automobiles, electronics, and other consumer goods, but also a cultural power, enduringly manufacturing and exporting its cultural goods and innovations. The ‘old’ Japan might be symbolized by its countless salary men, robotized machinery, and efficient manufacturing systems, while the ‘new’ and fascinating Japan is reflected through popular culture products (Otmazgin, 2008: 74).

Today Japan ranks first in the world in the number of patents, third in expenditure on research and development as a share of GDP, second in book sales and music sales, and highest for life expectancy. It is home to three of the top 25 multinational brand names (Toyota, Honda, and Sony). Various nation branding indices, be it the Anholt Nation Brand Index (NBI) (named after the pioneer of nation branding Simon Anholt), or the

³ ‘Gross National Cool’ is a term coined by McGray (2002) to describe Japan’s booming cultural innovations and lifestyles.

Country Brand Index (CBI) , run by Future Brand and BBC, have consistently listed Japan as no. 5 and no. 6 in the world since 2008 and then in 2010 respectively only few steps behind the G7 group (ibid, 2008). Japan gets top global marks for advanced technology from the CBI and in exports from the NBI. It also ranks high — around 8th to 10th place — in other areas, such as culture/heritage, tourism, people or quality of life (Legewie, 2011). According to the Marubeni Economic Research Institute's 2003 estimation, Japanese global cultural export value, including the media, copyrights, publishing, fashion, and other related entertainments and fine art, tripled in the 11 years between 1993 and 2003, totalling as much as JPY10.5 trillion for the entire period. Another report issued by Japan' Digital Content Association (2005) has indicated that Japan is the world's second biggest producer of culture, in 2003 occupying approximately 9.5 percent of the global content market, compared to America's 41 percent, China's 1.6 percent, and South Korea's 1.2 percent (ibid, 2008: 79).

Japanese pop culture - manga, novels, films, fashion, and even cosplay cafes - are hugely popular in Korea, China, Taiwan, and elsewhere. Japanese manufacturers rule the roost in home video games. Pokemon cartoons are broadcast in 65 countries, and Japanese animation is a huge hit with filmmakers and teenagers everywhere. Japan's public agencies have been able to build a well coordinated image abroad by launching a much focused campaign to export its pop culture). A testament to this is the creation of a Japan Brand Working Group in 2004 and the Japan Brand Development Assistance Program of the Small and Medium Enterprise Agency the same year (Legewie, 2011). One result has been increased tourism, the government's Yokoso Japan Campaign (meaning Welcome to Japan), which started in 2003 has reached about more than 10 million visitors till date. In 2007, Japan even started the International Manga Award for non-Japanese manga artists (Burgess, 2008).

However there are certain *limitations* of Japan's Soft Power too. Japan has had a history of past aggression with its neighbours, and unlike Germany, which repudiated its past aggression and reconciled with its neighbours by being within the framework of the European Union, Japan has never come to terms with its skewed historical record. The suspicion thereof lingers in countries like China and Korea even today which sets limits on Japan's appeal (Lam, 2007: 350 & 57). This erodes Japan's soft power greatly at least in its immediate neighbourhood, notwithstanding the allure of even its comics and cartoons. India however does not have any such violent history of aggression and bloodshed (as in the World Wars) as those of Japan which enhances India's soft power influence. But drawing lessons on

similar lines, India should try and get its region and its relations with its neighbours as cordial as it can. Though, its not that it hasn't been trying to pacify its relations in the region to the best of its ability, but a troubled insecure South Asian region definitely portrays a bad image of India within the region and elsewhere.

Japan also faces serious demographic challenges. By mid-century, Japan's population could shrink by 30 percent unless it attracts 17 million immigrants—a hard task in a country historically resistant to immigration. India however has an abundance of manpower taking its population of over a billion into account, and clearly has an edge above Japan. Moreover, the Japanese language is not widely spoken, and Japan's meagre English-language skills make it difficult to attract international talent to its universities. This is the case with India too with very low contribution of Hindi language enrolments (refer Table 3) to its soft power. Japan's culture remains inward-looking and this would be a great loss for not only Japan but the world. The main danger for Japan today is this tendency to turn inward, rather than becoming a global civilian power.

In terms of soft power, the problem is that manga and anime don't directly translate into state influence over other nations, so Japan may inspire youth around the world, but the J-Wave of popular culture don't do much for achieving national objectives. In fact, according to Akiyoshi Yonezawa, Japan's higher education does not contribute much to projecting Japanese influence (Kingston, 2009), only half as many Japanese students study overseas as did two decades ago (Nye, 2010), which is also evident from the Ernst & Young survey in which education contributes only 3.5% in the overall soft power . Japan's aid budget has also declined. In fact in order to become a regional leader in the Pacific Rim and get an edge over China, Japan has to invest more in disaster response. The service this could provide the Japanese people, and the goodwill they could generate abroad, could be of higher value than resources spent on military power (Burgess, 2008). On similar lines, as discussed in the previous chapter, India also by increasing its military involvement in disaster relief and management and humanitarian assistance, can gain immensely in its soft power credentials.

But the final blow to the Japanese soft power was brought by the Fukushima power plant crisis which clearly damaged Japan as a country brand. Ever since its perception overseas became largely negative, generating disbelief amongst masses that such an accident could happen in a high-tech nation as Japan. There was frustration with its crisis and

information management, and an outright fear of travelling to or making contact with its potentially contaminated products (Legewie, 2011). Japan's weak spots have traditionally been its *value system* and its *governance* and its perceived shortcomings in dealing with the crisis greatly affected its standing abroad (ibid, 2011). Unlike India, Japan's attempt to loosen the constitutional constraints on use of hard power is laudable, and automatically enhances Japan's soft power index manifold (Burgess, 2008). Some Japanese politicians talk about revising Article 9 of the constitution, which restricts Japan's forces to self defence, which however Nye thinks is unlikely to happen (Nye, 2010).

An important tactic for gaining in soft power, that India can learn from Japan is that Japan never compromises on its quality, be it its products or sometimes its services, and this is a vital contributor to the brand value of Japan. But in near future, quality of life and improved governance would mark Japan's path to a new identity (Legewie, 2011). Similarly India should also start focusing on the 'quality' aspect of its products and services abroad, which India largely lacks. Otmazgin emphasizes that there is no conversion of resources to diplomatic power, there is no creation of any substantial 'spheres of influence' for Japan, and this soft power can sometimes be counter-productive (Otmazgin, 2008: 75). Similarly India also is not able to translate its resources effectively to diplomatic power. The contribution of various indicators to Japan's overall soft power can be seen as given below:

Table 4f						
<u>JAPAN</u>						
Category	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Freedom	18.3%	18.5%	19.0%	19.4%	20.7%	21.2%
Rule of Law	17.9%	21.1%	18.6%	19.0%	20.3%	20.8%
Voter	14.2%	12.3%	12.7%	15.1%	16.1%	16.5%
CO2	8.1%	8.2%	8.5%	8.6%	9.2%	9.4%
Tourism	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%	3.4%	6.9%
Language	3.6%	4.6%	4.8%	4.9%	5.2%	5.3%
Media exports	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%	3.2%	3.5%	3.5%
Immigration	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%	3.4%	3.5%
University	6.0%	6.0%	6.2%	6.3%	6.8%	3.5%
Admired co.	14.9%	15.1%	15.5%	9.5%	3.4%	3.5%

TIME 100	2.0%	2.1%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%	2.4%
ESL 2.0%	2.1%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%	2.4%	
Olympic	4.1%	1.0%	1.1%	3.2%	3.5%	1.2%

Source: Ernst & Young Soft Power Index, 2012

IV. China

China is one of those rising global players who have been mobilizing their resources intelligently for wielding its soft power influence abroad. Its soft power advances reflect the shifting diplomatic balance elsewhere. Its launch of a global ‘charm offensive’ lead by the establishment of several educational outposts designed to promote Chinese language and culture named Confucius Institutes is an endeavour which skyrocketed China’s soft power standing in just under six years. The number of these institutes is more than about 320 now (McClory, 2010: 2). China has devoted significant resources in recent years to an attempt to augment its soft power. In 2009–10, it created several hundred Confucius Institutes around the world to teach its language and culture, and invested US\$9 billion in “external publicity work” that included a 24-hour Xinhua cable news channel on the lines of Al Jazeera (Nye, 2010b). Earlier in 2008 it spent billions of dollars on elaborately staged Beijing Olympics, and later became a host to various economic conferences acting as an “Asian Davos”.

Beijing has also been granting low interest loans to African and Latin American countries and building major projects in these territories. Some of China’s efforts have paid dividends. The enrolment of foreign students in China tripled over the past decade, while the number of foreign tourists increased dramatically. More Westerners are studying Mandarin. The money spent in the developing world has also given China more goodwill in some areas. Moreover, it is probably fair to say that during the ongoing economic crisis, the “Beijing Consensus” on authoritarian governments with successful market economies, looks more appealing in some circles than the “Washington Consensus” of liberal economies with democratic governments (Nye, 2010b). The figures given below succinctly substantiate the above claims:

Table 4g						
<u>CHINA</u>						
Category	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Admired co.	20.7%	20.3%	20.3%	20.3%	19.7%	20.9%
Tourism	20.7%	20.3%	20.3%	20.3%	19.7%	20.9%
University	20.7%	20.3%	20.3%	20.3%	19.7%	20.9%
Rule of law	10.4%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	9.9%	10.4%
TIME 100	14.1%	13.8%	13.8%	9.7%	13.5%	8.5%
Olympics	4.9%	4.8%	4.8%	6.9%	6.7%	7.1%
Media exports	1.4%	2.8%	2.8%	4.8%	3.4%	3.6%
Language	1.4%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	2.1%
Immigration	2.1%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%
Freedom	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%
ESL*	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%
CO2	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
Voter turnout	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Ernst & Young, 2012: 16

Maintaining its economic success has been critical for the Chinese government, both to retain its credibility and to attract more foreign investment. Each year, its official economic growth rates of 7 or 8 percent are looked at with scepticism by economists, on account of high rate of unemployment (or underemployment in some cases) and a moribund state sector which needs immediate revival. Still, the Chinese government's message to the outside world is that China is in a dynamic stage of growth, confidently expanding its economy and taking its rightful place among the World's economic players and top powers (Pocha, 2003: 3). This at times turns out to be counterproductive, generating suspicion in the minds of the others about what exactly is 'the Dragon' up to behind the 'Great Wall'.

As Nye puts it that what China fails to understand is that using culture and narrative to create soft power is not easy when they are inconsistent with domestic realities. The 2008 Olympics were a success, but shortly afterwards, China's domestic crackdown in Tibet and Xinjiang, and on human rights activists, undercut its soft power gains. The Shanghai Expo was also a great success, but was followed by the jailing of the Nobel peace laureate Liu Xiaobo and the artist Ai Weiwei. India has some obvious advantages over China when it comes to soft power. It's a democracy with more or less free and fair elections. It honours civil liberties like the freedom of religion and freedom of speech. And for countries that aren't keen on that stuff, it practices pretty much open economic policies as opposed to predatory practices like secretly subsidizing its industries to dump its products abroad and gain market share. India, however, always works through multilateral bodies and is more open to self-criticism than China (Overdorf, 2012: 2). India has huge lessons to learn from this since it too has a lot of inconsistencies with regard to its domestic policies. The only saving grace for India over China is that it still upholds the ideals of free press and democracy.

Much of the soft power that could accrue to China through the novels and films Chinese artists produce is diluted by the government's attempts to squelch works it sees as subversive. While Beijing, like New Delhi, promotes the export of selected films, it also heavily censors its own filmmakers and imposes tight restrictions on the import of US films into China (Pocha, 2003: 5). This greatly undercuts its soft power influence as is evident from the freedom index (table 6) which has constantly been only 1.4% (except in 2009) ever since 2005 and has the least voter turnout, having almost negligible contribution in the overall soft power of the country. Consequentially, Beijing's cultural products are viewed as "despite the government" instead of "because of the great Chinese tradition" (Overdorf, 2012).

Historically viewing, public diplomacy has been a weak area for China. A 2007 report entitled *Brand China*, identified China's national image as its greatest strategic threat (Ramo, 2007). The very concept of 'public diplomacy' is a distinctly foreign one for the Chinese who tend to use the term *wai xuan*, meaning 'external propaganda'. But over the last six years, China has embraced a softer approach to foreign policy. This transition was punctuated by the creation of the Division for Public Diplomacy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2004. Combined with the rapid expansion of Confucius Institutes around the world,

a growing number of foreign-language Xinhua news outlets, and a swelling public diplomacy budget, China's soft power capability appears to be on a steep upward curve (McClory, 2010: 6).

There are considerable limits to Chinese soft power. Only few other authoritarian countries have an affiliation for China's authoritarian growth model, it has little attraction for the democratic countries. China's single-minded pursuit of hard power components of economic growth as well as muscle power through military proliferation acts as a deterrent for enhancing its soft power. Corruption, environmental degradation and rapidly increasing income inequality can be significant triggers of social unrest. Despite Beijing's efforts to create the likes of CNN and BBC, its lack of freedom to press and extreme governmental control and censorship on any broadcast content gets very little international audience, since the information disbursed is infamously known to be definitely tracing only official party lines (Nye, 2012: 1).

China has welcomed the visibility that has come with hosting such events in the 1990s as the Asian Games and the UN International Women's Conference. China's exports of weapons and technology to South Arabia, North Korea, Pakistan and Iran, its aggression toward Taiwan and its crackdown on dissidents has troubled much of the world community. On the other hand, India's slide into Hindu religious fundamentalism and its aggressive approach towards Kashmiri's and Pakistan has brought the subcontinent to the brink of nuclear war four times in the last four years. This is a similarity between the two how they both end up eroding their images ((Nye, 2005: 1-2).

In recent years, both China and India have adopted foreign policies that have increased their attractiveness to others. But neither country yet ranks high on the various indices of potential soft-power resources that are possessed by the U.S., Europe and Japan (as is evident from table no 1). While culture provides some soft power, domestic policies and values set limits, as in China, where the Communist Party fears allowing too much intellectual freedom and resists outside influences. Both countries have a reputation for corruption in government. India benefits from democratic politics, but suffers from overly bureaucratized government. In foreign policy as well, both countries' reputations are burdened with the problems of long-standing disputes over Taiwan and Kashmir. Moreover, in the U.S., the attraction of an authoritarian China is limited by the concern that it could

become a future threat. The soft power of Asian countries, then, lags behind that of the U.S., Europe and Japan, but it is likely to increase (ibid).

Lessons for India

From US, India can learn that just as the US champions certain universal values and ideals as human rights and democracy, India does not represent any such ideals. This if not erode, at least does not add to India's soft power standing (Lam, 2007: 358). It has quite often been accused of being inadvertent towards the lapses in its democratic institutions and ideals, and also been found indulged in committing a lot of human rights violations in its strife torn areas like Kashmir and North- East. However, India definitely has an advantage over US soft power in the sense that it does not partake in military endeavours on the size and scale of the US and does not try to enforce its values as aggressively as the US. America's too much insistence of using hard military power, be it in the name of 'just war' against terrorism or propagating democratic ideals or active involvement in NATO's activities, certainly has contributed immensely in eroding its soft power. By over exerting on its military proliferation, India can lose immensely on its soft power especially in the South Asian region because it could enhance the security dilemma of already unstable region. Although, India did make mistakes in the past as in the case of Sri Lanka, yet India's overall image of being a soft power advocate has not tarnished.

Another lesson that India could draw is, learning from the blunders the US made by being 'hypocritical' in formulating its domestic policies. As Nye succinctly puts it, "Government policies can reinforce or squander a country's soft power and domestic or foreign policies that appear to be hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to the opinion of others, or based on a narrow approach to national interests" (Nye, 2004: 14) can irreversibly undercut soft power and this is exactly what happened with the US, as in the case of Iraq in 2003 (and presently Iran). People developed resentment not towards the US in general but against the Bush administration and its dubious policies. Due to its policies (foreign and domestic) of professing one thing and doing something else, it lost its credibility in general and although 'the public in most nations continued to admire the United States for its technology, music, movies, and television' yet majority of people in most countries said they 'disliked the growing influence of America in their country' (ibid, 2004: 14). So the message to be learnt for India from this situation could be that it should try and be as fair and

transparent as it can in formulation and implementation of its policies, domestic as well as foreign, so that it does not have to face the perils that US had to face at the end.

From Canada, India can learn the manner in which Canada with its soft diplomacy or in other words ‘niche diplomacy’ enhances its reputation. However, what curtails Canada’s soft power is the fact that whatever it does on the world stage is still refracted through the prism of the US (White: 2012). There seems to be a similarity with India here, which also is generally perceived on various international fora in unison with Pakistan and their entities as being symbiotic. Another testament to a highly-successful Canadian programme of outreach is the recent incident of a Canadian ambassador to China putting up pictures of his simple car, showcasing a very modest lifestyle, which sparked a debate amongst the Chinese citizens on the lavish lifestyle of their bureaucrats and diplomats, pointing towards the prevalent corruption within the Chinese government (Bland, 2012: 1). Thus, Canada’s relatively corruption free governmental and bureaucratic structure is something India should look up to if it has to cash on its soft power to the fullest.

From Japan, India can learn how it never compromises on its quality, whether its products or its services, and this is a vital contributor to the brand value of Japan. Indian economy has a large share of manufactured goods, hence it should also learn to pay more attention on the quality of products being produced and not just quantity (unlike China which gives it a bad image). This would add to its brand value and hence increasing its influence and ultimately soft power. Another point of attention is that, Japan's public agencies have been able to build a well coordinated image abroad by launching a much focused campaigns to export its pop culture as the Japan Brand Development Assistance Program and Yokoso Japan Campaign for promoting tourism. Indian public agencies also need to intensify their campaigns on similar lines.

As a matter of fact, Japan has had a history of past aggression with its neighbours, and unlike Germany, which repudiated its past aggression and reconciled with its neighbours by being within the framework of the European Union, Japan hasn’t come to terms with its skewed historical record till date. The suspicion thereof lingers in countries like China and Korea even today which sets limits on Japan's appeal (Lam, 2007: 350 & 57). This erodes Japan’s soft power greatly at least in its immediate neighbourhood India however does

not have any such violent history of aggression and bloodshed (as in the World Wars) as those of Japan which enhances India's soft power influence. But drawing lessons on similar lines, India should try and get its region and its relations with its neighbours as cordial as it can. Though, it's not that it hasn't been trying to pacify its relations in the region especially the neighbours, it has to work more towards keeping the region more peaceful, not for others but for its own benefit.

From China, India should learn the pragmatic manner in which it exercises soft power and manages its strategic priorities. A key component of such pragmatic management is keeping economics and politics distinct. Despite irksome bilateral issues with Indonesia, Vietnam, and Philippines, China has maintained economic engagement through development assistance and commercial activities with all these countries. In India's case, however, political differences have occasionally resulted in disruption in economic ties with neighbours. This undercuts its influence in the region and does not pay dividends in the long term. India must realise that good economic ties can serve as important confidence-building measures and can help in improving political differences. Learning from the Chinese experience in using soft power as a critical tool of regional strategy, India can enhance its soft power leverage in the region. While it does possess an edge in the cultural and educational dimensions, it is almost impossible for India to match China in economic assistance. China's economic assistance to Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan in South Asia are key examples that has helped China secure strong commitment from these countries and reap large strategic dividends. India should also do the same (Palit and Palit, 2011: 4).

China also fails to understand that using culture and narrative to create soft power is not easy when they are inconsistent with domestic realities. India is in an advantageous position in this case. It has a democratic set up with more or less free and fair elections. It honours civil liberties like the freedom of religion and freedom of speech and practices pretty much open economic policies as opposed to predatory practices like secretly subsidizing its industries to dump its products abroad and gain market share. India, however, always works through multilateral bodies and is more open to self-criticism than China (Overdorf, 2012). India has important lessons to learn from this since it too has a lot of inconsistencies with regard to its domestic policies. The only saving grace for India over China is that it still upholds the ideals of free press and democracy.

Conclusion

Thus, to sum up, it would not be an overstatement to state that India is doing fairly well in terms of cashing on its soft power credentials. This is pretty much evident from the surveys undertaken for the purpose of this analysis. In a comparison between the 'soft power indices' of India with nations like US, China, Japan, Canada and EU, all rate higher than India. It has a long way to go on a number of indices like the quality of education, tourism infrastructure etc. McClory however, points out that size, be it population, economy, or military, are not sufficient to score high on soft power indices. But it has a satisfactory performance in terms of projecting democratic ideals, freedom provided to its citizens and fluency in English. What is also an added value is that it has outshone most of the other emerging markets, lagging behind only China. But this does not mean India has to take China for granted since its aggressive yet monumental rise at times seems to be a threat to India's interests too. All in all, India's age old standing of being a 'soft power by default' (Wagner, 2010) has been safely upheld even today, though it has a very long way to go to reach the stature of soft power giants like US, Canada and Japan.

But how reliable are these surveys which lay the standards of measuring soft power? This is a question which requires immediate attention. Invariably, on an overall scale, only the West seems to have possessed by default all the resources of soft power and known how to proliferate soft power. The variables that are decisive in calculating soft power strength are also questionable. While the index provides an assessment of relative soft power strength, there are risks in extrapolating too much from the results (McClory, 2010: 7).

Chapter 5

Conclusion: The Future of Indian Soft Power

The discipline of International Relations deals with the study of relationships among countries, including the role of states, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and multinational corporations (MNCs) in the international system. It is both an academic and public policy field, which seeks to study as well as formulate the foreign policy of particular states. But it, quite often, ignores the fundamental aspects of the human social relationship which consists of culture and values. The concept of soft power with its emphasis on cultural attractiveness, political ideals and values brings a different dimension of power analysis to the discipline of IR. As per Nye's conceptualization, cultural components are of paramount importance where he explains that in today's information era, three types of countries are likely to gain soft power, "those whose dominant cultures and ideals are closer to prevailing global norms (which now emphasize liberalism, pluralism, autonomy); those with the most access to multiple channels of communication and thus more influence over how issues are framed; and those whose credibility is enhanced by their domestic and international performance" (Nye, 2004: 34).

The concept of soft power, apart from being rooted in culture and values, also provides an alternative conceptual tool to question the veracity of the conventional hard power premises to safeguard national interests. Soft power in this regard professes alternative avenues which supplement hard power dynamics. Hard power, which means getting what one wants by blatant use of political, economic and military coercive force, has been conventionally imagined as the only way to carry out an efficient and, consequentially the positive foreign relations. But the hard power centric perspective, ignoring soft power vis-a-vis cultural components, often weakens the bargaining capacity of a country. Moreover, the recent developments of civil unrest and uprisings in some of the African and the Middle Eastern countries show the vulnerability and limitation of hard power which is increasingly

becoming counterproductive. On the other hand, with the perpetual decline and unpopularity of hard power imperatives, soft power has simultaneously gained widespread currency and is, therefore, now regarded as an important and comprehensive indicator of national strength (Ernst & Young, 2012).

Furthermore, in the global system, popularity matters. Leveraging the tools of soft power can increase persuasive power, lessen the likelihood of conflict, or moderate violence if it comes. Countries in sync with these truths are more likely to garner the benefits of a safer world (White, 2009). However, soft power does not always guarantee the desired attraction and influence. After all, excellent wine and cheese do not directly incur soft power to France, nor does the popularity of Pokemon games assure that Japan will get the policy outcomes it wishes (Nye, 2004: 12). Therefore, much needs to be done beyond just showcasing the culturally ingrained ideals or characteristics.

Future of India's Soft power:- Prospects and Limitations

Keeping the maladies of the concept of soft power in view, the case of India becomes a very interesting and intriguing study. Despite of all the rich cultural resources India has, there not one single answer why it still lags far behind its neighbours like China and Japan in tapping its soft power resources. The fault lies in the fact that there is a general lack of synchronization and lack of coordination in the working of various institutions. For example, the Indian government has assigned the Department of Culture the function of negotiating various cultural agreements with other countries. But the implementation of these agreements lies primarily in the hands of MEA via ICCR. This lack of a central authority over the regulation of cultural diplomacy leaves all the institutions in complete disarray. Moreover, the ICCR's relative lack of autonomy to carry out activities on its own is a peril in itself. Moreover, the governments' 'conventional and unprofessional' outlook on the issue of enhancing soft power also serves as a deterrent to furthering India's soft power aspirations. However, the role played by initiatives like IBEF are immensely contributing to enhance its soft power and cultivating a positive image globally.

India's future prospects in the realm of soft power are contingent upon its relative performance on various indices of freedom index, educational avenues, tourism etc. which are pivotal in deciding the national soft power strength. Of course, measuring soft power can be quite a slippery and subjective endeavour. Keeping this in account London's Institute for Government took the initiative to devise a rational measuring system in 2007. However, the further research revealed that there could be 'no set methodology' for gauging soft power other than opinion surveys (Ernst & Young, 2012).

Based on the above methodology of comparison India is doing fairly well in terms of cashing on its soft power resources. This is pretty much evident from the surveys undertaken (by Ernst & Young, Jonathan McClory and Chicago Council of Global Affairs), for the purpose of this analysis. Nevertheless, in comparison to the developed nations, India has still a long way to go on a number of indices like the quality of education, tourism infrastructure etc. But it is credited with performance, in terms of projecting democratic ideals, freedom provided to its citizens and English proficiency providing it with a vital competitive edge. What is also an added value is that it has outshone most of the other emerging markets, lagging behind only China. Hence, India needs to pay some attention to China's ascent since its aggressive yet monumental rise at times seems to be a threat to the latter's interests too. All in all, India's age old standing of being a 'soft power by default' (Wagner, 2010b) has been safely upheld, even though it has a very long way to go to reach the stature of soft power giants like US, Canada and Japan.

But how reliable are these surveys which lay the standards of measuring soft power? This is a question which requires immediate attention. Invariably, only the West seems to have possessed by default all the resources of soft power and known its effective use. The variables that are decisive in calculating soft power strength are also questionable. While the index provides an assessment of relative soft power strength, there are risks in extrapolating too much from the results. Firstly, wielding soft power is very different than simply possessing soft power resources. Soft power's overt reliance on subjectivity than hard power, which relies largely on objectivity, renders it difficult to translate soft power into substantial foreign policy outcomes, putting the governments in a tight corner. Second, the effective use of soft power has a long gestation period which does not come up with immediate tangible results. Lastly, many soft power resources are beyond the control of

governments, which means they need to have organised system for its effective use (McClory, 2010).

Setting aside the clouds of pessimism shrouding India's future prospects as a soft power, the future of Indian soft power does not seem to be as dark as it sounds. A thing of relief for India is that, it is not considered as having any aggressive intensions or being as big a threat as China in Asia or to the rest of the world. This is definitely because India's soft power tactics have so far been fairly successful in promoting its power not only 'softly' but effectively. A rising India complements rather than challenges the preferred strategic, cultural and normative regional or global order. Most of the capitals, in Asia at least, view a rising India as a cooperative, attractive and non-threatening country (Lee, 2010). India advocates no particular ideology, nor does it operate within a defined foreign policy (or strategic planning) framework, beyond the assertion of national self interest generally focussed on the economic sphere. This however does not always turn out to be advantageous in the long run and leads to a muddled domestic and foreign policy. If India significantly manages to overcome the impediments of its domestic challenges, it is likely to project its soft power much more forcefully and effectively. For soft power at the end, attraction is the only key and lucrative elements of soft power like education, literature, art, and transparent governance do promote emulation by other countries. Political freedoms and civil liberties enhance states' moral authority, and give them the legitimacy to urge reform and offer assistance. The soft power balance has the potential to change more rapidly in the coming years than it has in the past. In short, today's economic and political environments are fluid. If the decline of the West is real then the shift in soft power toward the developing world may be faster than anyone has anticipated and India going at the pace it is going today, definitely is a frontrunner in the race (Ernst & Young, 2012: 17). All it needs is to strike a balance between national interests on one hand and political norms and values on the other.

In addition, India's gradual rise in its soft power credentials can also be attributed both to its domestic changes and to the new international distribution of power. Domestically, the challenge ahead is to find a new balance between the constraints of economic interdependence and the demands for an independent foreign policy. These tensions will increase the more India is integrated into the global economy. Nevertheless, India's size matters, be it the buying power of the middle class, the potential of its consumer

market or the richness of its human capital. Moreover, its size also matters with regard to the solution of global problems, be it climate change or the Millennium Development Goals (Wagner, 2010a). Further on political front, India's soft power gets duly backed up by its democratic resilience and transparency (in contrast to states like China). Its non interference nationalist ideas which pose a least challenge to the international order, makes environment more conducive to wield soft power. India's active role to become a stakeholder in the existing liberal order and to play by the rules rather than to promote alternative institutions in order to advance specific Indian values, also adds to its benefits.

Thus, in the course of this study it was found there is a multitude of definitions of soft power and it just doesn't confine to the tripartite classification of soft power resources as laid down by Nye. There are many other factors that are involved, including few country specific resources as well. Moreover, these structural components do not always have a positive influence in shaping the preferences of others and can at times also turn out to be counterproductive, if handled and projected inadvertently. Soft power does not always bring attraction and may sometimes lead to, as Hymans puts it 'soft vulnerability', (Hymans, 2008: 235). Nevertheless, expecting too much from the concept would be unfair. Despite soft power's credentials of getting things done the 'soft way', the conventional hard power strategies still hold much importance in the conduct of International Relations, otherwise emerging power centres like China and India would not have invested so heavily in their military systems and follow, if not fiercely, aggressive economic propagation. Therefore, the contemporary world scenario in a way demands to strike a fine balance between the two in order to gain a position of influence. This is precisely what Joseph Nye and other scholars as Wilson III, describe as 'smart power' i.e. the power gained by a well balanced use of hard as well as soft power. In other words, it's the ability to combine hard power and soft power effectively so as to make a winning strategy (Wilson III, 2008: 114). India also needs to follow a smart power strategy because owing to the constant security dilemma in South Asia, India is unlikely to reduce its military prowess. Moreover, its economy is also rapidly expanding. Hence, both of these combined with an intelligent strategy to wield soft power would definitely give an impetus to the India's aspirations of becoming a future superpower.

India is undoubtedly rich in soft power resources owing to its culture, heritage and values inherited from a history of thousands of years. But a closer look reveals many

limitations of India's soft power capabilities which arise out of various institutional inadequacies arising of the governmental machinery (MEA, ICCR etc) of wielding soft power. In the course of this study two types of instruments for providing soft power have been identified, governmental and semi or non-governmental. The *governmental* institutions through formal (public and economic) and cultural channels of diplomacy wield soft power. The public and economic diplomacy initiatives are taken care of by the Public Diplomacy Divisions of MEA and cultural diplomacy initiatives by the Department of Culture (and partly ICCR). It is the lack of synchronisation between these governmental units due to which India is not able to wield soft power effectively. The *semi governmental* instruments on the other hand involve public private partnership initiatives as the IBEF and India Future of Change Initiative; and promotional campaigns like 'India Everywhere' and 'Incredible India' and thus create images of a vibrant and prosperous 'Brand India'. *Non-governmental* institutions involve the role of non-state actors as NGOs and INGOs in wielding soft power for India. However, the governments' 'conventional and unprofessional' outlook on the issue of enhancing soft power serves as a deterrent.

The study further also focused on a comparative perspective on India's avenues of attaining soft power and zeroed down on key areas where India lags behind and the lessons that it could learn from other states. Soft power, being a relative and intangible concept from a methodological perspective, is difficult to be quantified. The relational nature of soft power, where the perceptions of one country vary substantially from another, makes cross-national comparisons difficult (Ernst & Young, 2012: 6). However, Jonathan McClory and Ernst and Young through their surveys provided a fairly good analysis of relative soft power credentials of various countries including India. Despite the relational nature of soft power and large number of differences on various points amongst the countries, there can still be drawn some similar attributes and qualities for which most nations share a universal understanding and appreciation. Hence, the surveys (Ernst & Young in particular) combined a wide range of indicators that captured the overall soft power capabilities across nation states (ibid, 2012: 6). This is pretty much evident from the surveys undertaken for the purpose of analysing soft power strength that India as of now is performing fairly well in this arena. In a comparison between the 'soft power indices' of India with nations like US, China, Japan, Canada and EU, all rate higher than India. It has a long way to go on a number of indices like the quality of education, tourism infrastructure, quality of life, development index etc. McClory however, points out that size, be it population, economy, or military, are not

sufficient to score high on soft power indices. But it has a satisfactory performance in terms of projecting democratic ideals, freedom provided to its citizens and fluency in English. What is also an added value is that it has outshone most of the other emerging markets, lagging behind only China.

So, finally the question of measurement becomes only a part of the soft power debate; and a great deal of future research is needed to better understand how soft power can be leveraged to meet objectives, how soft power strategies can be evaluated, and how causal links between soft power and policy outcomes might be established. However, from the perspective of the study, how soft power resources are measured and accounted for is an area to be taken seriously for forming effective soft power wielding strategies. This is precisely what India has to learn in order to attain a position of influence in the international system.

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