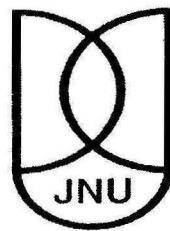


**COALITION POLITICS IN INDIA AND ITS
IMPACT ON INDO- BANGLADESH RELATIONS
(1996-2012)**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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Date : 29/07/2013

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “Coalition Politics in India and its Impact on Indo-Bangladesh Relations (1996-2012)” submitted by me 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

LBA	Land Boundary Agreement
CHT	Chittagong Hills Tract
AIADMK	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
AGP	Assam Gana Parishad
AITC	All India Trinamool Congress
BJP-	Bharatiya Janata Party
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
DMK	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
INC	Indian National Congress
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
UN	United Nations
ULFA	United Liberation Front of Assam
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
IB	Intelligence Bureau
SAFT	South Asia Free Trade Agreement
LeT	Lahkar- e- Taiba
AASU	All Assam Students Union
HuJI	Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The main theme around which this dissertation revolves is 'Coalition Politics in India' and 'its impact on Indo- Bangladesh relations'. Therefore it underlines the importance of describing the term 'Coalition'. The term 'Coalition' is a Latin word which is the verbal substantive of coalescere- co, which means to go or grow together (Spiro 1990). The term coalition is most often used in connection with political parties. Coalition government is frequently found in multiparty countries like India where no single party is strong enough to obtain an electoral majority therefore a number of political parties combine to form a single government to pursue specific objectives through joint action on the basis of 'Common Minimum Programme'. In this Common Minimum Programme they chart out their proposed future course of action in domestic and external areas in their ruling tenure (Pandey 2010).

Coalition Politics in India

Right after independence from the time of first general election there were a large number of political parties. However up to 1977, Indian National Congress was the dominant party. It was the ruling party both at the centre and almost in all states. 1977 elections proved a major step towards institutionalization of a two party system and formation of coalition government. The Janata Party emerged as a ruling party at the centre with the merger of four parties- Congress (O), Bhartiya Lok Dal, Jan Sangh, Socialist Party, and Congress for Democracy along with some other dissidents of Congress. However on the basis of 1980 elections, the Indian party system was again back to one party dominant system.

1989 parliamentary elections transformed the scene in unprecedented ways. It brought into power a coalition government at the centre in a formal scene. Again for the first time the party system at the centre truly acquired a multi-party character for more than two parties became of consequential relevance in the ninth Lok Sabha. In this election, the Congress was reduced to the status of single largest minority party and V.P.Singh with minority support replaced the Congress and became PM with the 'outside' support of BJP and Communists. V.P. Singh's so called self proclaimed expertise of management of contradictions failed to keep him in power even for one year and their experiment of coalition government collapsed and the Lok Sabha

elections of 1991 provided an opportunity to the Congress led by P.V.Narsimha Rao to form government. Again in 1996 and 1997 a non Congress coalition of Janata Dal and several regional parties, the United Front government came to power. During its two year tenure, this coalition formed two governments between the period of 1996 and 1998, initial one year under H.D.Deve Gowda and later under I.K.Gujral. Then the coalition government of NDA led by Vajpayee which ruled the centre from 1998 to 2004 (May 1998 to June 1999 and reelected in October 1999) consisted of members of the BJP and practitioners and believers of Hindu Rashtra and this government led by the forces of Hindutva was sustained and maintained from 1998 to 2004 (Mesquita 2001). The Manmohan Singh led coalition government from 2004 to 2009 was maintained and sustained by the 'outside' support of more than sixty members of the Communist parties. This marriage of convenience or inconvenience came to an end when the Communists decided to withdraw their outside support from the Manmohan Singh government on its pro-American foreign policies and nuclear agreement between India and US. The fifteenth Lok Sabha elections of May 2009 brought rich political dividends to the Congress and its allies and Manmohan Singh became PM for the second time and formed a coalition government at the Centre in 2009 (Mesquita 2001).

Thus since 1989 a long phase of coalition politics at the centre has began. The National Front led by V.P.Singh from Dec 1989 to Nov 1990, section of National Front led by Chandrashekhar from Nov 1990 to 1991, Congress led by Narsimha Rao from 1991 to 1996, United Front led by H.D.Deve Gowda from June 1996 to April 1997, again United Front from April 1997 to March 1998 led by I.K.Gujral, from March 1998 to Oct 1999 and Oct 1999 to May 2004 NDA led by A.B. Vajpayee and from May 2004 to 2009 and 2009 onward UPA government led by Manmohan Singh are evidences to the point (Arora 2002).

Increasing role of Indian states in foreign policy making during coalition era

In India, the role of states or provinces in foreign policy making is gradually increasing. This is mostly related to a change in the balance of power between the centre and states. The equilibrium existing between the two is a dynamic one. States start asserting themselves more in foreign affairs with a politically weak centre. This assertion increases further in a coalition government. *In the last two decades, India has seen the collapse of the dominant party system, leading to a demand for a more decentralized federal system from the regional parties.* Until the 1980s, people voted in state assembly elections as if they were voting to elect a prime minister,

but from the early 1990s they cast their votes with the primary objective of electing a state government. In this situation, it becomes important for chief ministers and local leaders to take care of local interests. The game in present day Indian politics is to consolidate a regional base so that one can have a larger say in central politics. *The increasing importance of states is evident in India's relations with its immediate neighbours, where bordering states are playing a greater role* (Chhibber 1999).

With the beginning of coalition era in Indian political scene and decline of one party dominance since 1996, the major parties or party like formations- the Congress and its allies, the BJP and its allies seems to be equally poised for competition. The Left and regional parties play a balancing role. In other words, actual and potential opposition and alternative to Congress has been provided by regional parties. They now share power at the Central government as partners of one or the other alliance or front. This process seems to be the pattern at least for the near future. Thus the state and regional parties have become important not only in deciding election outcomes but also in formation of government.

Foreign policy making is generally considered to be a function of the central or federal government. However in recent times it is witnessed that the role of important national units that is political units in their own right with some features of a sovereign state in influencing and directing foreign policy has become important. In India also the role of states in influencing foreign policy has been increasing but it is still far less than United States federal system where states are even playing a growing and determining role in implementing even national security issues and decisions (Howard 2004).

Kripa Sridharan has studied the role of sub-national units or non-central governments in the conduct of foreign policy and the changing dynamics of centre- state/provincial relations in a federal system. She argues that while the constitutions generally endow the central or federal governments with sole authority to manage the foreign relations of that country, in recent times the exclusive grip of the centre in this area is slowly being weakened by the activities of the units/members in federal unions (Sridharan 2003). These units are non-sovereign entities but have a fair degree of autonomy. They have different names—states, regions, provinces, Lander or canton. This also means foreign affairs have become more inclusivist where concerns of states have to be accommodated. This expansion of the foreign policy agenda has reduced the gap between foreign and domestic issues. Moreover, foreign policy today has also become foreign

economic policy with the integration of world economies. It is now increasingly difficult for the central governments to play the role of gatekeepers and to decide on policies that impinge on the interests of sub-national units. Today, central governments and their constituent units are facing issues such as multilateral trade, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) or even borrowing from multilateral organizations (Singh and Srinivasan 2006). These issues have allowed constituent units some degree of external authority. However, people such as Rob Jenkins claim that this role of states in making India's foreign economic policy is very limited and India cannot be classified as a case where states are engaged in performing 'constituent diplomacy'. According to Sridharan "This would be to understate the central government's continued role in managing such important policy matters as external borrowing (from private and multilateral sources) and the regulation of core infrastructure sectors including electricity, where despite states key roles, the central government maintains control over certain critical decisions". (Sridharan 2003).

Domestic politics and foreign policy are often linked, but it is difficult to explain these linkages on the basis of a single theory. It is generally accepted that countries with different political structures and arrangements respond to the constraints of the international system with different foreign policy strategies. It has also been pointed out that the emergence of states/provinces as important players in the shaping of foreign policy has actually hampered India's search for a grand strategy in the post- Cold War era. Arijit Mazumdar thinks that 'the emergence of coalition governments at the national level since the early 1990s, the country's federal structure, weaknesses in India's foreign policy institutions and the lack of a strategic culture within the country together constrain India's search for a post-Cold War foreign policy' (Mazumdar 2011). During the last two decades, significant changes have taken place in the electoral politics of India. Now India has moved away from the dominant party system prevalent in the Nehru era to a truly multi-party system. During the Nehru era, foreign policy making was completely centralised and there was little difficulty in accepting non-alignment as a framework. Now with the emergence of coalition politics where partners have disparate ideologies, the governments are more interested in ensuring their survival than making attempts to forge a coherent strategy that cuts across ideological barriers.

Constitutional provisions in India regarding foreign affairs

India is seen as a quasi-federal country. The Indian constitution empowers the central government to deal with foreign affairs and also makes it responsible for diplomatic, consular

and trade representation. Dealing with the UN, participating in international conferences, associations and other bodies and implementing decisions made there also come under the purview of the central government. The central government is authorized to enter into 'treaties and agreements with foreign countries and implementing of treaties, agreements and conventions with foreign countries'. The unitary feature of the Indian constitution is clear from Article 257, which confers the central government with the power to give directions to states in certain cases, thus making them subservient to the centre in those instances. Thus, on the face of it, it would appear that states have little role to play in foreign affairs, but the reality is somewhat different. Historically, Indian states have played a significant role in foreign affairs (Schedule VII of the Indian Constitution, Union List, items 10–14).

Most of the time, treaties signed by the central government deal with politico-security matters, but some also relate to issues such as foreign trade, taxation of foreign nationals and external credit. The constitution empowers the centre to sign such treaties and states have generally not shown undue concern about them, but there have also been occasions when states have shown unease when such treaties were expected to deal with items under state subject (Pran 2002). States have also shown discomfort when they thought that the treaties would profoundly impact them and they felt they had not been duly consulted.

Local state politics and India–Bangladesh relations

Local state politics has influenced India–Bangladesh relations for a long time. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that local politics to some extent was responsible for the creation of Bangladesh. Although various theories have been put forward for India's participation in the Liberation War of Bangladesh, an important reason was the presence of nearly 10 million Bangladeshi refugees who had spilled over into India (Jenneke and Chakma, 2002). Their presence made states such as Tripura, Assam and West Bengal lobby with the centre to actively participate in the liberation of Bangladesh. However, the issue of Bangladeshi migration did not stop with the liberation of the country and subsequently became a major issue in the Indian state of Assam, leading to a prolonged violent movement. It has influenced India–Bangladesh relations in the past and continues to do so. The presence of illegal Bangladeshis in India is a major bilateral issue (Kumar 2013).

The politics of states like West Bengal and Assam impact on India- Bangladesh relations and the role played by these states can often enrich policy making and implementation and prevent the

centre from jeopardizing regional interests and thereby protecting national interests as well. Undoubtedly an improved and tension free Indo- Bangladesh relations are in the mutual interests of both the countries, but for this the problems are required to be resolved in such a manner that it turns to be a win-win for both the countries. This can be possible if all stakeholders are taken into account and treaties are signed after due diligence and if they are implemented sincerely.

Understanding Coalition Politics and Foreign Policy through Theoretical Perspectives

The foreign policy theoretical debate on India- Bangladesh relations can be analyzed from three broad schools of thought. First, the Innenpolitik school which emphasizes that it is the domestic factors that are mainly responsible for state's foreign policy behavior. Second, the Aussenpolitik school which stresses on the Primat der Aussenpolitik that is the primacy of foreign policy in states international behaviour (Hildebrand 1973). Third is the Integrative perspective which makes an attempt to synthesize the opposing approaches of the two schools. These three perspectives can rightly describe the sources and drivers behind the state's behaviour in international relations.

Scholars of the Innenpolitik school of thought argue that domestic variables such as political and economic ideology, national character, partisan politics/ coalition politics, socio-economic condition, state institutions, the existence and strength of interest groups and pressure groups, public opinion, media and press, bureaucratic politics, the preferences and configurations of domestic actors etc. determine state's international behaviour. The roots of foreign policy of a state, is driven by internal political factors and must be located in the social, economic and political structures of states and their configurations and dynamics. On the other hand *Aussenpolitik school* argues that states conduct their foreign policy as a consequence of international pulls and pushes, and not to advance domestic ends. Structural realism which emerged as a dominant theory of international relations represented an extreme version of the Aussenpolitik school of thought. A variant of structural realism that is offensive realism argues that systemic pressure is the key determinant of state behaviour in an anarchic international system. Scholars of this variant of structural realism view the international system as 'Hobbesian' in which security is 'scarce' and therefore states, as rational egoists, are compelled to maximise their relative power position in the system. Hence, foreign policy is driven by motivation of state to enhance its relative power position in the system for security, and systemic pressures and opportunities, external variables and environment are the key determinants of states international

actions. This means that in contrast to the *Innenpolitik school* differences in internal characteristics of countries are relatively unimportant compared to systemic pressures and regardless of domestic characteristics similarly situated states will behave similarly (Chakma 2012).

Yet, some scholars argue that while both schools are right in highlighting internal and external variables in explaining the foreign policy behaviour of a state, they are wrong in highlighting one over the other. A synthesis of both sets of variables, is required for a complete understanding of a state's foreign policy behaviour. Therefore some analysts criticize the *Innenpolitik* and *Aussenpolitik* schools of thought by making the point that they focus either on domestic level variables or systemic factors in analyzing and explaining the foreign policy behaviour of states. They argue that this is a partial focus which does not provide a good account of states foreign policy behaviour. The relationship between international and domestic politics is a two-way traffic and one cannot be privileged at the expense of the other. Rather, they maintain that the challenge is rather how to integrate both sets of variables and build a framework that can explain which part of foreign policy is influenced by systemic factors, and which part of it is driven by domestic independent variables.

Robert Putnam argues that it is 'fruitless to debate whether domestic politics really determine international relations, or the reverse.' In his view, the challenge really is to know and theorise 'when' and 'how' external and internal politics are entangled and influence the foreign policy behaviour of states. Similarly, Zakaria maintains that 'a good account of a nation's foreign policy should include systemic, domestic, and other influences, specifying what aspects of the policy can be explained by what factors (Arora 2002). Paul Kennedy provides a sophisticated analysis of integrative perspective contextualizing Wilhelmine German's *Weltpolitik*. He specifies which part of the Wilhelmine foreign policy can be explained by systemic factors, and which parts can be explained by domestic structures and Kaiser Wilhelm's personality. But this research primarily focuses on *Innenpolitik* perspective as it revolves around 'coalition politics of India' and its impact on India- Bangladesh relations (Putnam 1988).

A Historical Overview of India- Bangladesh Relations

This is the picture of coalition politics in India. Now next pertinent thing in the order is to study the changing power dynamics at the centre and their impact on India- Bangladesh relations. As far as India- Bangladesh relations are concerned it is important to note that Bangladesh had

emerged as an independent state in 1971 discarding the two nation's theory which was the basis of India's partition in 1947. When India was partitioned on the basis of religion, Eastern wing was carved out of Bengal which was more than 1500 km away from western wing that is present Pakistan (Mukherjee, 2007)). Though people of both the wings were Muslims, they differed from each other culturally and linguistically. Importance of Urdu was totally unacceptable to them. The differences had continued and East Pakistan population had felt neglected. The people of East Pakistan had more similarities with West Bengal region of India. This Bengali nationalism leads them to look for independence as the only way out.

India played a significant role in creation of Bangladesh and was the first country to recognize it as a sovereign state. One of the reasons leading to the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan was its geographical situation which made it more a part of eastern rather than the western region. Involvement of India in Bangladesh liberation also created a large number of committed friends/foes of India. Besides they have cultural and linguistic affinities. Both of them have been playing important roles in determining relationship between the two countries. A major portion of Bangladesh is surrounded by Indian states, which make the country feel 'India locked to some' (Jacques 2000).

Mujib-ur- Rehman's first visit as PM of Bangladesh was to India. During this visit it was resolved that India- Bangladesh relations would be guided by the principles of democracy, socialism, secularism, non- alignment and opposition to racialism and colonialism in all forms and manifestations. India assured Bangladesh that it would never interfere in its internal affairs. A regular exchange of high level visits took place which underscored a number of agreements and treaties like- The Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1972, The Trade Agreement of 1972 and The Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) of 1974 etc (Mukherjee 2007).

On the assassination of Sheikh Mujib-ur- Rehman in 1975, anti- India forces became vocal and in some cases hysterical. General Zia- ur –Rehman who took over after military coup went with the projection of India as the enemy of independence and territorial integrity of Bangladesh. The India- Bangladesh relations became hostile and plummeted after the Awami League government was toppled and military regime took over. There were some changes when Janata Party came to power in 1977. With the induction of the Janata government, the Indian posture towards Bangladesh took a visibly cordial turn, highlighted by the Janata government's signing a five-year agreement with Bangladesh in 1977 for a guaranteed continuous supply of Ganges water for

five years and for undertaking long term projects for augmentation of Ganges waters. When in 1980, Mrs. Indira Gandhi returned to power, she refused to continue the 1977 Farraka pact and once again excluded Nepal from participating in any measures to augment Ganga waters in the longer time frame. Indo- Bangladesh ties were further strained due to high tension built upon the Talpatty (New Moore) island issue in early 1981, and almost a crisis situation existed when President Zia-ur Rehman was assassinated in 1981 (Sobhan 2005).

The assassination of Mrs. Gandhi provided a short respite to Bangladesh as Rajiv Gandhi after becoming the Prime Minister, exhibited a desire to mend fences and improve ties with Bangladesh. However, no progress could be made, apart from extension of the interim government on Farraka by two years, while differences between the two countries widened due to the Chakma refugee problem and India's decision to fix barbed wire fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh border to prevent the alleged influx of Bangladeshi immigrants into Assam. The defeat of Rajiv Gandhi and Congress (I) in the 1989 elections and the end of Nehru dynasty's rule held a lot of promise for a cordial turn in the perennially sour Indo- Bangladesh ties. The National Front Prime Minister V.P.Singh had also expressed the desire to change the pattern of Indian attitude towards small neighbours. Allaying the fears of small neighbors from India's growing military strength and India trying to be a regional bully V.P.Singh government gave an assurance that their approach to neighbouring countries would be one of friendliness, not arm-twisting or bullying. V.P.Singh's limitations in maintaining the balance of power in New Delhi, especially against the machinations of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and the ramifications of its campaign against Babri Masjid along with the intra- party manipulations of his close associates, did not allow him to bring about a singular shift in Indo- Bangladesh relations during his relatively short tenure as Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh underwent important political changes due to the success of opposition groups in removing President Ershad by holding of well- organized elections in which Begum Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh National Party (BNP) came to power defeating the pro- Indian Awami League in 1991. The beginning of the 1990s saw the advent of democratic governance in Bangladesh after 16 years of military rule. She further consolidated her position after successfully amending the constitution and changing the Presidential form of government to a Parliamentary system. After Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao had established his minority government in 1991, he invited Begum Khaleda Zia for parleys in New Delhi .The two countries

discussed pressing issues of Ganga waters, Chakma refugees, Shanti Bahini insurgency and other long-standing disputes. Although the talks ended on a positive note, no specific progress materialized (Bajpai 2011).

India- Bangladesh Relations during Coalition Era (1996-2012)

India- Bangladesh relations have particularly witnessed major shifts during coalition phase beginning from 1996. H.D.Deve Gowda succeeded Atal Bihari Vajpayee as the leader of the United Front and became the new Prime Minister of India on 1 June, 1996 (Mukherjee, 2007). There in Bangladesh secular alliance of Awami League returned to power by winning the 1996 elections. Although falling short of the historical ideals of the early 1970s, Bangladesh- India relations improved considerably under Sheikh Hasina led Awami League government (1996-2000).

One particular sign of a gradually improving relationship was the conclusion of the Ganges water sharing agreement. In June 1996, shortly after she became the Prime Minister, Hasina initiated discussions on Ganges water and PM Deve Gowda's government adopted a positive attitude. The two countries reached a consensus in few months. They signed an agreement on the division of Ganga water at Farraka. This agreement with duration of thirty years signaled a great improvement of relations between the two countries. Thus both PMs Deve Gowda and Sheikh Hasina showed great sagacity, leadership of a very high order and foresight by agreeing to share waters of river Ganga. In pursuance of the principle of "equity and fair play" the two countries signed a historic agreement on 12 December, 1996 on sharing of Ganga water (Indian Recorder, 1997). The treaty was signed by Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart H.D.Deve Gowda. West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu who played a key role in the negotiations was present with Foreign Minister I.K.Gujral. The treaty was to be valid for 30 years with provisions for review after every five years or earlier. Provisions were made to take care that neither Bangladesh nor India or more precisely West Bengal is at a disadvantage. The signed treaty provided that if the availability of water at Farakka is 70,000 cusecs or less, it will be shared between the two countries on 50-50 basis. If the quantum is between 70,000 and 75,000 cusecs, Bangladesh will get 35,000 cusecs while India will get the rest. If the quantum rises above 75,000 cusecs, India will retain 40,000 cusecs while the rest will go to Bangladesh. At that time the Left Front government which was the coalition partner at that time was happy with the treaty and said that it was in both countries best interest (Indian Recorder, 1997).

Inder Kumar Gujral, the Minister for External Affairs under Deve Gowda dispensation became the new PM on 21 April, 1997. During his two tenure as a country's foreign minister, the first during the brief premiership of V.P. Singh and then during Gowda's term as Prime Minister, he devised and formulated a doctrine which became popularly known as Gujral doctrine. His five-point theory, in essence, argued that India with its size and resources should adopt a policy of friendship and non-reciprocal assistance with neighbours like Bangladesh, Maldives, Bhutan and so on. It should act in good faith and trust. Against all these odds, the ever diplomat Gujral doctrine secured results. The two sides strived to find an amicable solution to pending issues such as problem of Chakma refugees, trade, defence, etc. New Delhi shared her experience of having negotiated with the Nazas and Mizos and advised Dhaka to adopt a similar policy. It is to the credit of Sheikh Hasina that she took note of the Indian experience and solved the problem, signed a peace accord on Chittagong Hill Tracts with the Jana Samhati Samiti for the return of Chakma refugees, bringing peace to the Chittagong hill tracts. This had a favourable impact upon diplomatic relations between India and Bangladesh for a large number of refugees from Chittagong Hill Tracts were residing in India and India was interested in their repatriation (Andrew 2012).

The NDA government in India (1998-2004) tried to further improve relations with Bangladesh and took cautious steps while dealing with Bangladesh. The new regime inherited a tension free Indo- Bangladesh relation except minor differences on some bilateral issues. Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, paid a goodwill visit to New Delhi in June 1998. The visit had an added importance because it was the first tour by a foreign dignitary after India exploded its nuclear device on May 11 and 13. India handed over ten criminals wanted by Bangladesh, while Dhaka reciprocated by handling over ten ULFA members (Thakur and Pandey 2009). Thus Sheikh Hasina's goodwill was reciprocated by NDA and relations between the two improved. *The presence of illegal Bangladeshi migrants in India was another contentious issue on the bilateral agenda. The issue is often looked at through the political prism in India and seen to be used in vote bank politics especially at the state level in India. BJP has always demanded that the government of Bangladesh reciprocated India's wish for friendly relations by agreeing to stop infiltration of its nationals and winding up its policy of giving shelter to several ISI backed anti- India extremist and terrorist group.* It hopes that this will go a long way in improving and opening a bright new future for the two countries and for the Indian subcontinent in general. By

solving the recurring problems like floods, which creates havoc both in Bangladesh and north-east India. challenges of poverty alleviation and improving the living standards of teeming millions in Bangladesh can solve problem of infiltration. Their manifesto has repeatedly projected that the BJP's campaign against illegal immigrants from Bangladesh in no way detracts them from their desire to look forward to friendly and cooperative relations between India and Bangladesh (Thakur and Pandey 2009).

Thus during Sheikh Hasina's tenure, India and Bangladesh have been constructively active in bilateral cooperation for the development of both neighbours and in resolving crucial issues such as the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty of 1996, CHTs Accord of 1997 (Bhardwaj 2003), protocols for cooperation of passenger bus service between Dhaka and Kolkata and Dhaka and Agartala, bilateral trade promotion agreement and most importantly addressing the security concerns of her neighbours. Sheikh Hasina's governments (1996-2001 and 2008 till date) have understood well the need of the time and revived the gesture that the father of nation wanted to maintain with India (Chakma 2012)

Thus the ups and downs in Indo- Bangladesh relations are very much measured along the differentiating political discourses of two forces in Bangladesh. India- Bangladesh relations had become hostage to the confrontational politics of Bangladesh, where one or the other political force has nationalized the 'India factor' for their political gains. There have always been present simmering differences between the secular and fundamentalist elements in the polity and society of Bangladesh. Thus over the years the ruling political elites have been shaping Bangladesh policies towards India in a way that secures their domestic base. The foreign policy of a country seeks to promote and protect its core national interests, even though priorities may vary from government to government.

UPA I rule coincided with BNP tenure and rule by caretaker government. During the BNP's second tenure led by Khaleda Zia from 2001 to 2007, overt hostility in Dhaka towards India reached an unprecedented peak. This was partly designed to divert attention from internal problems in the government, but it also took advantage of the perception that India was partial to Sheikh Hasina led Awami League. As usual India- Bangladesh relations were marked by anguish and disappointment. The BNP always took the anti Indian stand for domestic political discourse, particularly appeasing their radical political alliance. For example, the Awami League government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had signed the significant Ganges water treaty

of 1996. The then opposition political party BNP opposed the agreement, expressing concerns over the socio- economic impacts of the treaty on the country. The party went to the extent of saying that they would revive the treaty if voted to power. But BNP did raise the question of reviving the treaty during her term in the government (2001-06). In fact on the lines of military regimes, she has also given top priority to Islamisation and emphasized relations with the Islamic world (Nair 2008).

In 2009, New Delhi had a new coalition government headed by Congress Party and Manmohan Singh became Prime Minister for the second time. In the 2009 general elections in Bangladesh, the Awami League obtained a two- third majority in the national Parliament. When Sheikh Hasina and Manmohan Singh came in from elections in 2008 and 2009 respectively, both were forward-looking, seeking to do something for the bilateral relationship. As an outfit of Hasina's emergence as a secular representative and pro- Indian leader, she gave New Delhi a major priority in her foreign domain. Both the governments affirmed that they would promote the resolution of all bilateral problems. Soon after coming to power, Sheikh Hasina took a laudable initiative on this matter and India's response was highly favourable (Pant 2008).

Sheikh Hasina visited India in January 2010. In course of Hasina's path breaking visit, she expressed readiness for undertaking and introducing fresh initiatives in matters like overland access, trade, water sharing, among many other issues that had virtually become impossible to talk over the past years and had acquired disproportionate salience in bilateral ties. Hasina's visit was a remarkable success in the regional development. Awami League and their allies described it as a historic visit though the opposition BNP was critical. This visit promised to restore and build upon the trust between the two countries on a much larger scale. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had agreed to revisit the 1974 Indira- Mujib pact on land borders and adversely possessed enclaves, promised not to do anything on the proposed Tipaimukh dam on the Barack River which may adversely affect Bangladesh, and move to resolve river water dispute. Three major initiatives were undertaken by India (Chakma 2012). First, there was the US\$1 billion credit line to improve Bangladesh's infrastructure. This was the highest amount of aid given by India, as one time assistance to any country. Second amidst the raft of five agreement signed, one on cooperation in the power sector was also included. According to it, India was committed to providing 250 MW of power to Bangladesh every day and third was to reduce the negative list of items imported from Bangladesh and accord it 'zero tariff' treatment

(Choudhary, 2010). There were substantial paybacks for India as well. India would be able to obtain access to two Bangladeshi ports, Chittagong and Mongla. This would open up the landlocked Indian northeastern states to the Bay of Bengal. Steps were taken to facilitate transit of goods to Bangladesh from Nepal and Bhutan through India, and between India's northeast through Bangladesh. A project to link the Indian state of Tripura to Bangladesh was agreed upon. The upshot of the visit was the 50- paragraph joint communique, one of the longest ever issued in recent times (Choudhary 2010).

The momentum generated by Sheikh Hasina's visit was reciprocated by New Delhi when Manmohan Singh, the leader of UPA II government visited Bangladesh in September 2011. Dr. Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka was not just another Indo- Bangladesh summit held in the neighbouring country. What distinguished this trip was that it was undertaken along with a group of Indian chief ministers. Dr. Singh was the first Indian head of government to lead a high powered delegation since 1972 a similar visit was undertaken by Indira Gandhi for signing the historic Indo- Bangladesh treaty of peace and friendship. The Prime Minister visit was crucial in both geo-strategic and political terms for both countries as it went to address concerns that have troubled the two neighbours for too long. Interestingly enough accompanying the Indian Prime Minister to Bangladesh, his entourage included official dignitaries like the External Affairs Minister, S.M.Krishna and Chief Ministers of the state of Assam (Tarun Gogoi), Tripura (Manik Sarkar), Mizoram (Pu Lalthanhawla) and Meghalaya (Mukul Sangma). However, the Chief Minister of West Bengal- a major stakeholder in the Teesta issue- Mamta Banerjee's absence was conspicuous and demonstrated her protest against the final draft of the river water sharing agreement, since she argued that the final draft was prepared without her knowledge where the sharing of water interest on part of West Bengal was overlooked. As a matter of fact, though not against the sharing of Teesta waters with Bangladesh altogether, Mamta Banerjee protested against any agreement signed by the government of India that would provide Bangladesh 25% more water than what was promised to West Bengal, which would adversely affect the districts of Coochbehar, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, North and South Dinajpur (Chakrobarty and Chakraborty 2012). Eventually in the backdrop of this problem between West Bengal government and the Centre with reference to this issue, the agreement had to be put in the backburner weighed down by coalition compulsions. The non- signing of the water sharing issue has not only shocked the Sheikh Hasina government but also gave space to the Bangladeshi Opposition parties to criticize

Hasina's inability to sign the agreement with India. This unresolved problem has provided the Bangladesh government with a bargaining chip vis-à-vis granting New Delhi permission for overland access through Bangladesh to its seven land-locked northeastern states as a measure to expose India's northeast to mineral exploration, including oil, gas and coal and be an important step toward realizing New Delhi's ambition of using the region as a connecting point to Southeast and East Asia. Subsequently Bangladesh has denied overland access after India went back foot on its commitment to sign the water-sharing agreement of the Teesta river (Roy and Mamoon 2011).

In our federal scheme of things, nothing is done or will be done without consultations with the state government. Any agreement to conclude will have to be accepted by the state governments and Bangladesh. No agreement will be done without the consultation of the state governments. This weakness of India's policy making and the major constitutional problems with reference to Centre- State relations in a federal structure has placed the Indian Prime Minister in an awkward position in the mindset of the Bangladesh government. Consequently Manmohan Singh had to concede to Miss Banerjee's dissenting voice, at the cost of damaging a protracted attempt to elevate relations with Bangladesh to a new high. This event made it threadbare that in spite of the fact that the Constitution of India puts foreign policy under the purview of the Union List, the leader of Central (UPA) government could hardly afford to alienate the Trinamool Congress Party (led by Mamta Banerjee) since it is the second largest constituent of the UPA, holding almost 26 parliamentary seats.

The federal structure of the Indian political system and the ongoing coalition politics of the country had negatively impacted the process of making a neighbor a partner in development. This caused immense embarrassment to the central government, which has been pushing hard for a better relationship with Bangladesh. Ms Banerjee pulled out of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's trip to Dhaka in September 2011, expressing her reservations about the treaty. Ms Banerjee's opposition prompted the Centre to put the treaty on hold and to consult West Bengal before signing it. Thus unlike earlier coalition experience in which Jyoti Basu of Left Front government played a positive role in bringing Ganges water treaty, this time Mamta Banerjee of Trinamool Congress was not in favour of Teesta river sharing. However in other areas where regional politics was not dominating the scene, no major hindrances came in the way of central government to pursue national interest. The two countries inked framework agreements on land

boundary demarcation and exchange of adversely held enclaves which may help settle the decades- old border disputes. As reported in The Hindu on September 11, 2011 the agreement included exchange of adversely held enclaves. involving 51,000 people spread over 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh and 51 Bangladeshi enclaves in India. The total land involved is rapidly 7000 acres. Prime Minister has announced the access of the Bangladeshi nationals to Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves through the 'Teen Bigha Corridor' round the clock which makes the people break into rapturous applause. The other deals the two countries made include memorandum of understanding on protection of Sundarbans tigers and preservation of its bio-diversity, on cooperation in the field of fisheries, in the field of renewable energy, cooperation between the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), New Delhi and BGMEA Institute of Fashion Technology (BIFT), Dhaka, protocol on conservation of the Royal Bengal Tiger of the Sunderban, protocol to the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement, railway cooperation in transit for Nepal, exchange of programmes between Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Doordarshan, educational cooperation between Dhaka University and Jawaharlal Nehru University. and cooperation in renewable energy. The agreement signed during September 2011 by Dr.Singh and Sheikh Hasina is titled somewhat vaguely as "Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development" between Delhi and Dhaka. Having analyzed the ongoing relations between India and Bangladesh, especially under the UPA Phase II government, which started with Sheikh Hasina's visit to India and was reciprocated by Manmohan Singh's sojourn to Dhaka in September 2011, it is clear there are a number of areas, where bilateral relations have improved drastically (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India Record, 2011).

As reported in Dhaka Courier on September 13, 2011 although Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's last visit to Bangladesh (6 September, 2011) has been a mixed blessing at present, it may mark a new dawn in the history of Indo- Bangladesh relations, and break fresh grounds in bilateral ties in future. Efforts were in progress to reach agreement on sharing the waters of the Teesta river. But at the last moment, Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee rejected the deal and cancelled her travel to Bangladesh, saying the agreement would hurt farmers in the Paschim Banga. Having analyzed the ongoing relations between India and Bangladesh, especially under the UPA Phase II government, which started with Sheikh Hasina's visit to India and was reciprocated by Manmohan Singh's sojourn to Dhaka in September 2011, it is clear there are a number of areas, where bilateral relations have improved drastically.

A Brief Overview of Chapters

In pursuance with this research topic after my first chapter 'Introduction', the second chapter in this dissertation is on 'India - Bangladesh Relations: Issues and Problems'. This chapter deals with the various issues between India and Bangladesh such as sharing of river waters, project Teesta, Tipaimukh dam project, land border issues, exchange of enclaves and adverse possessions, maritime border disputes, illegal immigration, economic issues such as transit and trade issues, security, insurgency and terrorism. In my third chapter that is 'Coalition Politics in India since 1996', I have discussed about the coalition governments that ruled the centre since 1996, the ideological principles of these political parties regarding the foreign policy objectives and their relations and policies in dealing with neighbor states, their inclination and stand on different issues. 'Impact on Indo- Bangladesh relations (1996-2012)' is my fourth chapter which has described and analyzed in detail the social, political and economic relations, strategic and security concerns that existed between the two countries during the period of coalition government at the centre starting from 1996 to 2012 which included the period of United Front Government and NDA and UPA. It describes in detail the domestic compulsions in making and implementation of foreign policy and the pulls and pressures of coalition politics. Last but not the least is the concluding part with the chapter on 'Conclusion'. This chapter concludes with the analysis of the findings of the relations that persisted between the two states during NDA and UPA rule and projects the impact of domestic politics particularly the changing party rule at the centre on foreign policy decision making. It contains suggestions and the way ahead in improving bilateral relations by resolving certain issues which are bone of contention and hamper smooth diplomatic relations.

Understanding Coalition Politics and Foreign Policy

From recent developments of Indo-Bangladesh relation, it appears that India is caught in a limbo due to domestic political impasse. The rise of a high demanding regional party, The Trinamool Congress, in historically moderate West Bengal and the very nature of the federal structure of Indian polity compounded the Indo-Bangladesh situation. With secular Awami League in power in Bangladesh which is considered more pragmatic and less rhetorical about relation with India on one side and the secular UPA coalition led by the Congress party of India on the other, it was a natural expectation that the relation between the two nations would flourish in the light of the worldwide trend of increased regional cooperation but there goodwill failed to deliver.

Government at the centre is entangled in the internal political intricacies owing to the reduced capacity and internal strife of the multiparty conglomerate in power in India at present. Other than the Congress no other party in the coalition is a national party and the primary focuses of these parties are their local power bases at the provincial level where they want to grasp or maintain the political clout. These parties share lesser responsibility in terms of some important union government functions like foreign relation. The situation is worse when a foreign relation in question involves some conflict of interest between the federal government and the coalition partner regional party and the latter is unwilling to demonstrate a rational sense of responsibility as coalition partner of the central government and rather remain arrogant to score a high political point at local level. Mamta Banerjee was not even ready to recognize the broader benefit of West Bengal itself in an enhanced Indo-Bangladesh cooperation on bilateral issues like transit, anti-terror cooperation, reordering of border enclaves etc (Kumar 2013). Given her state of temperamental mindset and hasty political behaviour, worsened by the weaker strength of UPA government in the face of it, the government had to give upto her demands. The central government would not like to risk the survival of their coalition by pushing Mamata in turn. Moreover, the union government of India tends to follow the federal polity norm of trying to take the concerned provincial leadership aboard while dealing with neighbouring nation (Norbu 2005).

The role of subnational units in international affairs is a growing. Scholars of political science have traditionally seen the conduct of foreign policy as the exclusive domain of the national government. This would be an especially apt observation about India's federalist system some years before. The Indian constitution has given the center particularly strong powers—so strong, in fact, that some have described it as “quasi federal” because of the lack of autonomy it affords to the states. Yet, there is an increasing emerging consensus now that the states have not been shy of foreign policy advocacy. *The era of coalition governance has increased such advocacy and, potentially, influence, especially in the context of globalization and economic reform and liberalization* (Pandey 2010). The role of Indian Border States in the conduct of foreign policy toward their transnational neighbors has increased due to their bargaining capacity in coalition governance. Being swayed by a host of facets like provincial ethnicity, caste, communalism, and secessionism, regionalism at some places and, in the positive side mass aspiration for much publicized economic emancipation Indian domestic politics has turned into a complex affair.

India is no unitary republic and its federal structure has distributed political power centers across its length and breadth. The demise of the dominant party era of Indian National Congress has not done much good to its coherent entity and effective actor as a nation (Griffiths 2002). Again, India is an emerging force in international politics and its animosity with precariously troubled Pakistan, silent competition with China and ameliorating terms with the US shapes and reshapes her regional and international objectives. Her troubled north-east makes Bangladesh naturally important to her. Convenient and cost-effective communication, transshipment and transportation are vital for the economic catching up of the Indian north-east with the spectacular development of many parts of the rest of the country. This is politically crucial for her as well. It is no denying that, in broader perspective, India and Bangladesh both need each other mutually despite domestic political hurdle and have to work towards comprehensive relationship equilibrium based on rational mutual benefits and keep reconstructing it as and when it gets off-balanced (Trivedi 2008).

Chapter 2

India - Bangladesh Relations: Issues and Problems

Since its emergence as an independent nation in 1971, Bangladesh's relationship with India has been patchy so far, intermingled with periods of coziness, neutrality and lull, but generally mired in mutual mistrust with Bangladesh being increasingly suspicious of India's intentions. The relations between Bangladesh and India are important and have a strong historic basis. The prospects for these relations to grow in strength are indeed enormous if they are pursued for mutual benefit and with mutual respect. Our geographical proximity, cultural affinity and shared history should form the parameters of our relations. There are various issues which are areas of cooperation and conflict in India- Bangladesh relations and which determine their course of action. The perceptions of the two countries differ widely on major issues concerning bilateral relationship. Bangladesh perceives that India is not sensitive to her concerns regarding river- water sharing, demarcation of maritime boundary and ratification of the Land Border between the two nations. Dhaka also feels aggrieved that India is building a 'Border Fence' without consulting her. New Delhi on the other hand continues to blame them for illegal migration. There is also a huge trade imbalance in India's favour. Some of the important factors in their relations are:-

Border Issue

India and Bangladesh share almost 4,096 km of land border, of which 6.5 km of land along the Comilla-Tripura border is officially considered disputed (Mukherjee 2007). An agreement was signed by the Presidents of the two countries in 1972 which was not ratified by India and hence could not be put into effect. But the damage to the relationship was minimized by India's good gesture of offering the Tin Bigha corridor to Bangladesh in 1972, which would work as an entrance to Bangladesh enclaves inside India. In line with the Land Border Agreement of 1974, the matter of lease in perpetuity of the Tin Bigha Corridor to Bangladesh was finalized through the exchange of letters between the foreign ministers of the two countries in October 1982. In 1992, the government of India agreed to keep the corridor open for Bangladesh nationals at every alternate hour during the daylight time. India has shown considerable flexibility on the issue in 2001, agreeing to open the corridor for the citizens of

Bangladesh for 12 hours (Choudhary 2008). Bangladesh continuously pursued her demand of 24 hour unfettered access to the corridor, which was eventually granted by the government of India in 2011. In his path-breaking visit in September 2011 to Dhaka, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, a principal agreement was signed which included a Protocol to the Agreement Concerning the Demarcation of the Land Boundary between India and Bangladesh, including an un-demarcated land boundary, exchange of enclaves- 111 in India and 51 in Bangladesh, and adverse possessions. India agreed to provide 24-hour access to Tin Bigha corridor for the residents of Bangladesh enclaves of Dhangram and Angorpota. (Ministry of External Affairs of India Record, 2011). In light of the considerable importance of land boundary issues, both sides place great emphasis on finding suitable solutions to boundary-related problems. The 4096 km long India- Bangladesh is one of the most difficult areas to patrol because of the hostile topography, riverside patches, dense forest hills, arable lands and dense human settlements (Wright 1988). The porous border has led to numerous trans-border problems, including infiltration into the Indian side mainly Assam and West Bengal, smuggling of arms and drugs contraband goods, illegal movement of persons, and common crimes such as kidnapping for ransom, cattle lifting, extortion etc.

Maritime Boundary Disputes

India and Bangladesh share their maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal. There are four issues involved in the maritime boundary. First, is the delimitation of the Haribhanga border river boundary, especially the ownership of South Talpatty Island, which has to be settled. Second, is the determination of boundary of territorial waters up to 12 miles Third, there is a need for determination of the boundary of the exclusive economic zone of another 188 miles from the end of territorial waters. Lastly, there remains the issue of boundary demarcation of the continental shelf up to another 150 miles from the end of the exclusive economic zone (Ho and Bateman 2013).

Soon after the signing of the Land Border Agreement in 1974, Bangladesh announced her maritime boundary. Immediately thereafter, she awarded oil exploration rights to six companies in the Bay of Bengal without waiting for ratification of the boundary. India viewed it as an encroachment and informed these companies accordingly, who abandoned their work. The issue has arisen because of the different approaches being adopted by India and Bangladesh. While India has consistently advocated "Equidistant (meridian)" principle for

demarcation, Bangladesh has been advocating “Equitable” principle. Bangladesh feels that by the ‘equidistant’ principle, she will be sea-locked between India and Myanmar and will lose out on the vast riches of the Bay of Bengal, as her EEZ will be narrowed. (Bangladesh Institute of Policy Security Studies, 2009)

Dhaka states that her maritime interests include a 700 km of coastline extending deep into the Bay of Bengal and claims 166,000 sq km of EEZ, further augmented by numerous islands of her 16 coastal districts. Nearly 32 million Bangladeshis reside in these areas, 4 million being directly involved in fishing by trawlers. Her 90 per cent of foreign trade is transported through sea (Ho and Bateman 2013). The areas claimed by Bangladesh have rich biological, chemical and geological resources which can substantially add to her economy and wealth. As regards oil, there is only 5 per cent possibility of getting 60 or 70 TFC, 59 per cent possibility of getting 32 TFC and 95 per cent possibility of getting 8 TFC. While these claims are yet to be exploited, Bangladesh argues that having a concave coastline, her EEZ should extend from the two points of her coast directly perpendicular into the Bay of Bengal so that she can get an “equitable” portion of the Bay of Bengal, rather than follow the “equidistant” principle being proposed by Myanmar and India (Bangladesh Institute of Policy Security Studies, 2009).

Illegal Immigration

Illegal migration from Bangladesh is one of the most important facets of Border Management, a challenge being faced by India since 1971. The continuing illegal immigration from Bangladesh into India remains a serious issue. The long and porous borders, socio-economic pressures coupled with ineffective border controls have been major contributory factors. The high population density, endemic poverty and vulnerability to the vagaries of nature exacerbate the flow of illegal immigration to India. They have come in search of employment and have settled down mostly in slums. Some non-Muslims have been illegally coming as refugees because of occasional communal tensions. The migration of persons from East Pakistan and then Bangladesh into India has been substantial. Besides Assam and West Bengal, Bangladeshis also sneak into Tripura while Mizoram and Meghalaya are used as a transit routes for smuggling of narcotics, arms and drugs. And most of the migration among both Muslims and Hindus is for economic reasons due to flood or drought or lack of employment opportunities, though some of the latter, sporadically and in small numbers is

due to violence against the minorities. Although initially there has been some exodus among both Hindus and Muslims due to tacit encouragement from India, especially in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but it stopped thereafter. *In 20th century, India since independence has perhaps witnessed the world's largest refugee influx from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh* (Egreteau 2006).

Table 2.1 - Bangladeshi Migration to Assam

Period	% Growth during 1971-1991			% Growth during 1991-2001		
	Hindus	Muslims	Difference	Hindus	Muslims	Difference
Assam	41.89	77.42	35.53	14.95	29.3	14.35
All India	53.25	73.04	19.79	20	29.3	9.3

Source: URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_immigration_in_India

Table 2. 2 - Bangladeshi Migration to West Bengal

Period	% Growth during 1981-1991			% Growth during 1991-2001		
	Hindus	Muslims	Difference	Hindus	Muslims	Difference
West Bengal	21.05	36.67	15.62	14.26	26.1	11.84
All India	22.8	32.9	10.1	20	29.3	9.3

Source: URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_immigration_in_India

The issue first became politically active when the All Assam Students Union started agitating in the mid 1970 against the central government for what Assamese saw as a policy of liberally allowing and even encouraging Bangladeshis to enter India to increase the number of votes for the Congress Party. Later it came to the fore when the 1981 census results showed that in West Bengal and Assam in particular, but also in Tripura, the over all population increase was three times the national average, and that the growth of the Muslim population in particular was too high to be explained by natural causes (Singh 2010).

There have been agitations going on in Assam since 1970s against illegal migration from Bangladesh. A few cases of attacks were also reported on the camps of migrants, especially by the All Assam Student's Union, the student wing of the Assam Gana Parishad (AGP), a regional political party, which also ruled the state from 1987 to 1992. After much deliberations and signing of the Assam Accord between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the AGP, border fencing was planned to check the illegal immigration from Bangladesh. Besides the BSF guarding the border at the IB with the fence, a second line of defense has also been planned with a force of approximately 4002 policemen at 28 border posts in depth especially in the districts of Dhubri, Cachar and Karimgang (Chatterjee, 2008). The main task of this force is for detection and deportation of illegal migrants, prevention of infiltration of foreigners and patrolling along the border with BSF. The AGP has also been pressing for an all party meet to discuss the issue, as they feel that agents of ISI and other terrorist and militant organizations infiltrate from Bangladesh along with other migrants. The AASU has been demanding electrification of the fence and shoot at sight orders like in the western sector with Pakistan or in Jammu and Kashmir, which the government has not agreed to. However as reported in The Times of India, 2006, the centre has agreed to construction of a road behind the fence all along the border, so that the BSF troops can carry out effective surveillance of the border, by day and night.

The presence of refugees creates several problems in social, cultural, political and economic spheres, both for the host country and the refugee. The issue of migration became sensitive as large number of Bangladeshi nationals, who entered into India illegally, have spread all over the country causing socio-economic problems, rise in crime and is causing change in demographic pattern in certain areas. Apart from the usual suspects, the militants and economic migrants, the recent political turmoil in Bangladesh has also resulted in many

Bangladeshi political dissidents and people from the religious minorities attempting to sneak into India to avoid political and religious persecution. Various reports also certify that the large number of sophisticated arms and ammunition are being smuggled to north eastern parts of India from Bangladesh. In addition to the porous nature of the border and the constant flow of people have made it easy for Indian insurgent groups to cross over into Bangladesh, where they have set up safe houses and training camps under the benign eyes of Pakistani and Bangladeshi intelligence services. Harboring of Indian insurgents inside Bangladesh is causing a serious threat to the integrity and sovereignty of India. There are no authentic figures available of the exact number of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh in India. There estimates vary from 12 million to 13 million. An estimated 600,000 Bangladeshis come to India each year (Khan 2009).

Today the issue has become a major internal security threat as some of them have been involved in terrorist activities. It was disclosed by the Home Minister in 2008 in the parliament that out of the Bangladeshi nationals who had come to India through West Bengal on valid documents between 1972 and 2005, nearly 12 lakhs did not return to their country after expiry of their visa. The BSF which guards the porous India- Bangladesh border claimed that agencies probing various terror incidents in the country did not share information with the BSF first, leading to failure to take action on time. Whatever actions have been taken so far against militant outfits like HuJI and LeT along the border were based on media reports. As reported in Assam Tribune on August 21, 2009, it is to the credit of BSF that despite all challenges between 1998 and 2008, they apprehended 217 militants and recovered 581 weapons and 18342 rounds of ammunition.

Besides causing strain on the infrastructure and changing the demographic setup of the border states, the issue has taken a seriously security turn. A number of Islamic organizations of Bangladesh and Pakistan through ISI and DG FI use these illegal immigrants to expand their network and carry out criminal and terrorist tasks in India (Kumar 2003). The evidence obtained from 2002 attack on the US consulate in Kolkata, Varanasi blasts of 2004, the Hyderabad Mosque and Delhi blasts in 2007- all revealed that militants are using Bangladesh as a transit and training camp for their activities in India. Most of the illegal immigrants come to India due to poverty and unemployment in Bangladesh. Often, they are duped by mafia, criminals and smugglers, who take money for ensuring free passage and then treat them as

bonded labor and even force the women into prostitution. A few even argue that the Bangladeshi labor has become an important part of running Indian households as maids. Often smugglers and criminals also attempt to cross the border illegally at night. This results in exchange of fire between soldiers of two sides in which at times innocent villagers also get killed. Nearly 90 per cent of the firing incidents occur while chasing smugglers of cattle, either through land or river routes often at night. In the meanwhile, Bangladesh has to seriously undertake development of the border areas, so that the attraction and inducement of illegal migration is reduced (Jain 2008).

Unfortunately, the attitude of Bangladesh has been negative on this issue. While some leaders totally deny that there is any illegal immigration, others say that it is a natural phenomenon which happens even in the European Union.

Cross Border Smuggling

The volume of un-structured trade from India to Bangladesh countries is estimated at nearly 3/4th of the official dollars. Cattle top the list of items smuggled from India as they are in great demand in Bangladesh for meat. Non- milking cattle are transported by smugglers having contacts on both sides, from places as far as Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, by train and trucks on the plea of grazing. Once in the border areas, they are smuggled on the chars from where they are floated down the rivers or tied with boats, there being no law to check their movement in India (Madaan 1996).

When caught by the BSF, they are kept in the stockade for a brief period and then auctioned, and are often purchased by the smugglers or their representatives, who again attempt to smuggle them through a different riverine sector. Other items smuggled from India are phensedyl, sugar, biri, ganga, heroin, salt, Indian currency, fruits, fish, paddy, seeds, medicines, cigarette, clothing items, spares of motor vehicles and cycles, gold, silver, wooden boats, saris, country liquor, electronic items, diesel, kerosene and oil products, condiments, betel nuts, tobacco, soyabean, timber, skin, cotton yam milk powder, onion and potato. Items mostly smuggled from Bangladesh in to Indian are CFC cylinders, palm oil, fish, set saris, synthetic yarn, Bangladesh and fake Indian currency, brass, VCD cassettes, DVD discs, soap, readymade garments, refined oil, green onion and garlic. In these anti- smuggling operations, BSF and BD rifles maintain close liaison, interact at sector and sub- sector commanders levels and try to pushback innocent persons who may have stayed across the IB (Bamni 2010).

Islamic Fundamentalism and Terrorism

Bangladesh is the largest Muslim country in the world with over 85% of its population being the followers of Islam. In spite of being a Muslim country it emphasized secularism in the constitution of 1972 but after the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman in 1975 the new rulers turned towards Islamisation of the nation and in order to establish its Islamic credentials, inserted an invocation on the top of the constitution adding new articles and clauses. In 1988, General Ershad inserted an article in the constitution which declared that the state religion of the Republic is Islam, but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in the Republic. As a result a number of religious parties have emerged which press the government to implement Islamic principles in governance. The political scenario in Bangladesh indicates that religious fanaticism is on rise and the development has affected socio- economic life of the country (Saha 2007).

Religious fundamentalism and effects of the outside Muslim world gave birth to several terrorist and militant extremist groups in Bangladesh that include Harkat ul Jihad Al Islami (HuJi), Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), and Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). In this context it is the general view of the media observers that *the presence of two Islamist parties, the Islamiya Okiyya Jote (IOJ) and the Jammata-e- Islami as a coalition partner in the former ruling Bangladesh National Party (BNP) had expanded Islamist influence in the country and created space within which terrorist and extremist group could operate.* As reported in BBC, News, 2005 Bangladesh's creeping estrangement from India is rooted in an attempt by its political leaders and elite to shield their secular heritage from the creeping Islamisation of their society. They fear these fundamentalists would succeed in enlisting Bangladeshi nationalism to overwhelm its secular polity is the main reason why every government in Dhaka has felt obliged, at least in public to adopt a less than cooperative attitude to India.

Thus Bangladesh has become home to Islamic fundamentalists and terrorists. These groups gained political patronage and have been gaining strength since 1975. They started indulging in anti- state violent terrorist activities in 1990s, threatening peace and life of the innocent people and tried to destabilize the government in power. Their links with foreign terrorist and fundamentalist organizations often sponsored by Pakistan's ISI and Bangladesh DG FI encouraged by LeT and Al Qaida and supported by madarasas being run with Saudi financial

assistance, have created concern not only to the state but also to the region and the world (Uddin 2006). Since 1990, they have also indulged in terrorist activities. Taking advantage of the porous border, poor economic conditions and religious affinity across the border, these groups have been infiltrating their cadres into India for carrying out terrorist activities through their Indian counterparts. Involvement of terrorists from Bangladesh in terrorist attacks in Kolkata in 2002, in Varanasi in 2004, Ayodhya in 2005, New Delhi bomb blasts of 2007, and Mumbai attacks of 2008 has been established (Bamni 2010). Their links with terrorist groups in India, in particular with the Indian Muslims (IM), LeT and Hizbul Mujahideen has been established.

Notwithstanding India's attempts to improve and consolidate its bilateral relations with Bangladesh, the latter continue to indulge in hostile acts that compromise India's security and territorial integrity. From the recent past Dhaka deliberately ignores the disruptive activities of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence which is out to destabilize India's north-east as part of its long-cherished desire to bleed India through a thousand cuts and eventually dismember the state. In the Indian view there is no doubt that terrorist groups, largely those which target India, do get support in Bangladesh; that a number of terrorist actions from the neighbourhood against Indian states have been planned and carried out by such groups; and that the government has, to say the least, done much less than it could have to control all this. The government of India, from time to time has been providing list of terrorist and anti Indian activities to its Bangladeshi counterpart. But the attitude of Bangladeshi has been luster and in clear indications that they are not at all interested in handing over them to India.

However, the heart of the matter lies elsewhere. Bangladesh is less than helpful on the issue of terrorism because of the control of the armed forces over such operations. Every government after 1975, including post 1991 governments, has tried to ensure that the armed forces are kept reasonably well funded and equipped. But the justification for well-equipped forces can only be threat from India. Military exercises in Bangladesh are traditionally conducted against a fictitious 'Wolf Land', a thinly disguised name for India. Though Bangladesh has not accepted openly or acknowledged request to arrest and extricate Indian insurgents residing in Bangladesh, there is convergence in views between Dhaka and New Delhi on the issue of spread of fundamentalism and terrorism in the region, especially as it affects both the neighboring countries (Singh 2009).

Water Disputes

Water is a strategic resource which, unlike many other resources, flows across political boundaries, often leading to conflict over international watercourses between and among riparian states. As the stakes are high, inter- state cooperation for the management of common water resources is most desirable. One of the most important cases of conflict in hydro politics is that of Bangladesh and India, plaguing their relationship for nearly four decades. Water is becoming a major point of conflict between the nations. Water, being a vital natural resource with economic as well as social value, plays a vital role in the field of relationship between the two countries.

The two countries share as many as 54 rivers (border and across boundaries), including some of the mightiest in the world such as the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and the Meghna (Sinha and Mohta 2007). The principal water problem, from Dhaka's point of view, is that India unilaterally extracts water from these rivers upstream without any concern for the needs and rights of Bangladesh, and often to the detriment of the lower riparian state. India, on the other hand contends that unless the Ganges water is augmented from other sources, the water needs of Bangladesh can scarcely be met in the long run. *The common water resources have been so politicized that 'hydro- cooperation' between the two neighbours has so far been minimal. Conflict and cooperation have mostly been limited to water- sharing neglecting other issues such as flood control, navigation, hydro- power generation, water quality and other environment related issues. The water- sharing agreement too has been limited to the case of Ganges River.* Repeated attempts on the part of Bangladesh to engage India in talks concerning the common rivers, particularly the Teesta, have not yet led to significant breakthrough, to the frustration of the former. Recent reports about India's plan to divert waters from its eastern Himalayan rivers to the country's water- stressed western and southern regions through inter- basin link canals have raised deep concerns in Bangladesh over the impact of this massive Indian project on the lower riparian state (Sinha and Mohta 2007).

The origin of the water dispute between Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) and India may be tracked back to the Indian decision in 1953 to construct a barrage at Farakka, about 15 miles upstream from the Bangladesh- India border in Rajshahi, ostensibly to flush out silt from the Calcutta (now Kolkata) port. It was strongly felt in (East) Pakistan that the upstream diversion of the Ganges through a feeder canal into the Bhagirathi River would reduce the flow into

Bangladesh through the Padma River. Farakka barrage has been the matter of dispute right from the date the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace was signed by the then Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi and Bangladesh founding leader and Prime Minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman on 19th March, 1972 (Bagchi 2011). This treaty led to the establishment of a joint river Commission to work towards the common interests and sharing of water resources, irrigation floods and cyclone control. As per the treaty, Farraka barrage was built in 1975 about 10 km from the border of Bangladesh, controlling the flow of the Ganges, possessing strong economic and religious importance and diverting some of the water into feeder canal linking the Hooghly river, keeping it silt free. Thus despite protests from Pakistan, the construction work on the Farraka barrage began in 1960-61 and was completed in 1975. The Bangladesh government agreed in April 1975 to test run of the feeder canal for 41 days (Bagchi 2011), but India continued to unilaterally withdraw water at Farakka, to utter dismay of the lower riparian state, and to its detriment in terms of the negative impact on irrigation, flood control, navigation, employment, fisheries, salinity intrusion, and the ecology in the south- west of the country. The dispute came to be known as the **Farakka Barrage issue**. This issue has the potential to disturb the relationship between the two countries because this water is needed by Kolkata for industrial and domestic use as well as for irrigational parts in the other parts of West Bengal, whereas Bangladesh needs this water for irrigational purposes (Dutt 2010).

Bangladesh having been unsuccessful in convincing India about the severity of the problem raised the issue in 1976 in several international forums, including the United Nations. However, the two countries signed a five-year bilateral agreement in 1977 on sharing the Ganges waters to the satisfaction of both the parties. For Bangladesh, a guarantee clause of 80 percent of the minimum flow in the lean season (January- May) to the lower riparian was important. India would not renew the agreement in 1982; instead the two co- riparians signed that very year a three year MoU, followed by a similar MoU in 1985 (Choudhary 2000).

Augmentation of the Ganges flow in the dry season, as well as the formula to share this became the bone of contention and the principal focus of negotiation between the two countries. India's link- canal proposal to diver water from the Brahmaputra River in the east to a point above Farraka through Bangladesh territory and Bangladesh's proposal for water reservoirs in upstream India and Nepal did not lead to any settlement of the dispute. As there

was no bilateral understanding between the two countries on sharing of the Ganges water, India continued its unilateral withdrawal of the river flow from 1988 until a 30- year treaty was signed with Bangladesh in 1996 (Ray 2007)

Table 2.3
Ganges Treaty, Farakka Barrage Water Sharing, January- May

Flow at Farakka (m ³ /s)	India's Share	Bangladesh Share
<70,000	50%	50%
70,000-75,000	Balance of flow	35,000 m ³ /s
>75,000	40,000 m ³ /s	Balance of flow

Source: Salman and Uprety (2002)

Tipaimukh Dam

Tipaimukh dam, a critical and controversial issue in India- Bangladesh relations has been bedeviling the already sour ties between the two countries. The controversy surrounds India's proposed Tipaimukh dam project over the Barak River in Manipur in the north-east. The Barak flows westwards into Bangladesh and bifurcates into the Surma and Kushiyara rivers that merge with the Meghna river system in the downstream country. The Tipaimukh dam is a \$1.7 billion project that aims to generate 1,500 MW of hydroelectric power. The project aims to generate power and control floods in Manipur and neighboring Mizoram. Bangladesh accuses India of planning to divert water by building Tipaimukh dam in Manipur. However, experts in Bangladesh and India tend to disagree on the purpose and impact on both the countries. There is, however, a widespread perception in Bangladesh that India, in the first place, has violated the provisions of the 1996 Ganges water sharing treaty in that it has not consulted or informed Dhaka of the Tipaimukh dam project before embarking on it, that India is still not providing sufficient information on the project, and that India's current assurances are not substantive, lacking costly signaling meant to reassure Bangladesh (Hashmi 2011).

As the project envisaged displacement of people since a number of villages were likely to get submerged, vested interests, including those of political parties and militant outfits, opposed it from the very start. In 1995, Chief Minister of Manipur, Shri Rishang Keishing denounced the

project and three years later, in 1998, Manipur state assembly passed a resolution against it. The safety of the project has also been commented upon by experts, citing seismic factors and possible damages to flora and fauna, endangering species like pythons, gibbons, herbal and medicinal plants. Besides, the project could also present threats to cultural, linguistic and land rights of tribal population and lead to submergence of 90 villages within a 311 sq km circle. (Bamni 2010)

However, the project aims to generate power and control floods in Manipur and neighboring Mizoram. The project will also result in developing the so far neglected mountainous region with roads and newly developed villages, thus improving the quality of life of displaced locals, on the pattern of Teri Dam Bhakra- Nangal projects. The Central government has termed the project as 'a milestone of development' and the 'panacea for the region' and decided to complete it, despite local and international opposition (Ngaihte 2005).

A section of people in Bangladesh, mainly of the BNP feels that the dam will result in the deltaic region through which Barak flows before draining in the Bay of Bengal getting less water, eventually turning the area of Sylhet district into a desert. They also state that the dam will result in lower levels of flow, impacting availability of under- ground water through tube wells, used extensively for agricultures. Bangladesh believes that the construction of the Tipaimukh dam may affect the flow regimes of the down- stream rivers Surma and Kushiya (Bangladesh) leading to negative impacts on the economy, environment and river morphology of north- east Bangladesh. The sustained and determined efforts by successive governments in Bangladesh initially elicited a positive response from the government of India. However, despite repeated assurances, India has recently proposed the construction of the Tipaimukh barrage in its territory which may lead to bitterness if Bangladesh is not taken into confidence. Bangladesh has also been expressing its deep worries over the proposed interlinking river projects in Indian (Jiten 2007).

Bangladesh's contention that as "the upper riparian state India must take Bangladesh consent" is not as per international law. The international law only states that "consideration should be given to the needs of the lower riparian state." It however gives no "veto power" to the lower riparian state. The opposition party in Bangladesh has been urging the government to take up the case against India before the UN and other international forums.

Teesta River

Another dispute relating to water between the two countries is the Teesta river dispute. Bangladesh requires a large amount of Teesta water because a big rice area of the country depends upon this water for irrigation. It is a fast flowing mountainous river which enters the plain area of Cooch Behar after traversing through the hills of Sikkim and West Bengal. Then it enters Bangladesh and flushes out to the Bay of Bengal. The river is known to be prone to floods during monsoon seasons. India's requirement of Teesta's waters is more for generating electricity than for agriculture. Negotiations started on the project in 1970s, and to start with, India offered to divide 20 per cent of water to each country. However, due to political compulsions, Bangladesh did not agree but the waters continued to flow (Bari and Tori 2001).

During 1980s, India decided to construct a dam in the hilly area for power generation and a few canals in the plains for bringing more areas under irrigation. Like the Ganga water treaty, the Teesta project has the prospect of becoming a benchmark for future projects. It is in Bangladesh's interest to resolve the issue of additional water supply. Being run of the river project, India does not have any reservations on accepting any reasonable demands. The proposed agreement on the sharing of the waters of the Teesta River could not be signed during the visit of Indian Prime Minister in September 2011 due to the opposition that the proposed agreement would reduce water for irrigation in the areas of northwest Bengal. As a matter of fact, though not against the sharing of Teesta waters with Bangladesh altogether, Mamta Banerjee protested against any agreement signed by the government of India that would provide Bangladesh 25% more water than what was promised to West Bengal, which would adversely affect the districts of Coochbehar, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, North and South Dinajpur (Chakraborti and Chakraborty 2012).

Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, after the first Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meeting with her counterpart S.M. Krishna, said: 'On Teesta there is a huge expectation in Bangladesh. I think if India cannot deliver on that expectation, our relations will take a huge hit. I'm not sure our relationship can afford it' (Bagchi 2012).

Lack of Funds

Water development requires huge financial resources that countries like Bangladesh and India, particularly the former, often find difficult to muster. Given the differences in the will

and policy between the two co-riparian's, which prevent a joint approach between them for funding, the donors are often found to be reluctant to make any financial commitments.

The Mistrust Factor

What follows from the aforementioned is a bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh that may be characterized by lack of mutual confidence and will to cooperate with each other. The upper riparian tends to become insensitive and occasionally, even overbearing towards the lower riparian while the latter develops a sense of helplessness and frustration. Consequently, the need to view the water issue as a shared problem is either overlooked or neglected.

Lack of Follow-Up in Water Negotiations

The 1996 treaty includes only one river: the Ganges. The hope in Bangladesh was that this was only the beginning of a process of continuing cooperation on the water issue, leading to agreements on several other common rivers like the Teesta, Dharla, and Muhuri. The treaty actually bears indications in this direction and also established the principle of equity, fair play and no harm to either party. Bangladesh is now somewhat disappointed by India's protracted manner of negotiations over these rivers. Moreover, it is horrified by India's renewed river-linking project because of the disaster it is thought to be causing to lower riparian (Iyer 2007).

India's river networking venture has been designed to connect 38 rivers through 30 links, 9,000 km of canals, 74 reservoirs, and several embankments by 2016 to store water during monsoons to create irrigation potential for an additional 150 million hectares of land. The project will in fact divert water from the Brahmaputra towards the Ganges, thereafter driving it into the Mahanadi and the Godavari. The Godavari will be linked to the Krishna, and then to the Pennar and Cauvery (Sengupta 2009). The Narmada will flow into the Tapi and the Yamuna into the Sabarmati. The interlinking proposals essentially comprise three links:

1. Southern Water Grid: interlinking the Mahanadi, Godavari, Pennar, Cauvery and Vaigai in peninsular India;
2. Interlinking the Brahmaputra with the Ganges, Subernarekha, and Mahanadi; and
3. Interlinking the Gandak, Ghaghara, Sarda and Yamuna through Rajasthan to Sabarmati (Sridharan 2011).

Besides these three major links, a number of minor links will be made under the peninsular and Himalayan components. This massive inter-basin transfer is to be completed by 2016. The proposed river-linking project in the upstream has significant impacts on the socio-economic, ecological, environmental, biological, and eventually morphological characteristics of the river systems in Bangladesh. Some of the adverse impacts are:

1. The river-linking project would have a disastrous impact on the economy of Bangladesh. In the long run, it will also lead to the internal displacement of millions of its citizens.
2. The implementation of such a project would most certainly lead to more severe flooding during the monsoons and worse droughts in the lean season.
3. It would increase salinity across the country and cause a sharp fall in sweet water levels.

Water Policy

The international river water policy of a nation is based on its approach towards water rights, water needs and water use, power status, riparian position, status of relationship with co-riparian states, national legal system, sensitivity to the international comity of nations and to the co-riparian need etc. Initial claims to water in negotiations are often justified in terms of one or several legal doctrines. *These doctrines seek to formulate a general approach to division of the scarce resources of river water. There are five such doctrines or legal doctrines* (i) the theory of absolute territorial sovereignty; (ii) the territorial integrity theory or natural water flow theory; (iii) the theory of prior appropriation; (iv) the theory of community interests (v) the theory of equitable utilization of inter-state river waters, or the equitable apportionment theory (Nazem and Kabir 1986).

India, in theory at least, seems to uphold the theories of absolute territorial sovereignty and prior and prior appropriation, resulting in the establishment of her water rights and benefits on the basis of numerous water projects and denying these to downstream Bangladesh. India views the GBM systems as one single unit and prefers harnessing the resources and dispute settlement and management in an integrated manner. India once even held the view that the Ganges was not an international river in the first place, as most of its drainage basin falls within its territory. Bangladesh has often accused India of procrastination in negotiation,

negotiation from a position of strength and resorting to pressure tactics, attempting to link water with non- water issues and making the water issue a political instrument. And also of offering no financial or technical/technological help, and not sharing her vast experience in the water sector, even withholding information in the field of flood forecasting and several other meteorological aspects, and preference for bilateralism as opposed to multilateralism, even in respect of international rivers flowing through more than two countries. However, the long- term Ganges Water Treaty of 1996 with Bangladesh amply demonstrates that India is politically able to alter its doctrinal orthodoxy and recognize the water rights and needs of the lower riparian state (Sridharan 2011).

Bangladesh, for obvious reasons, used to adhere to the theory of natural water flow or the territorial integrity theory. Having signed the Convention on the Non-Navigational Uses of International Water Courses of 1997, Bangladesh now officially upholds the theory of equitable utilization of international river water. Bangladesh does not view the GBM systems as one single, unit but rather approaches these as three separate units of river systems. Bangladesh prefers multilateralism in water talks in order to offset the adverse effects of bilateralism.

The Transit Issue

India had transit facilities through the territory of Bangladesh across waterways to its seven north-eastern states until these were disrupted following the India- Pakistan war in 1965. Actually, India has been more interested in road and railway transit facilities in order to gain easy access to its distant north-east, particularly since the birth of Bangladesh. India's desire for cooperation from Bangladesh on such transit facilities became keener since the 1990s. *Granted transit rights, India would be able to send goods to its north-eastern states at a much lower cost, and this would help in integrating the economies of these states with the mainstream Indian economy. India's north-east would also have access to Bangladesh's Chittagong seaport.* In other words, India's objective is to mainstream, politically and economically, its insurgency-wracked, isolated north-eastern federating units through a comprehensive development package. India considers that transit through Bangladesh would cost it a great deal less in implementing its development strategy. India tends to present to Bangladesh a tantalizingly rosy picture of the transit/transshipment issue in terms of financial benefits from revenue and transportation, employment generation within Bangladesh, and

increase in bilateral trade (Peter, 1996). However, the transit issue is extremely controversial in Bangladesh. Those who favour granting transit facilities to India argue in terms of global economic trends and geo-economic perspectives. They view inter- state road networks as infrastructure that is crucial for development (Madaan 1996).

However, *those who oppose granting transit facilities to India sound the alarm bell*. The foremost argument is that it would impinge upon Bangladesh's sovereignty, as it would facilitate India's interference in the internal affairs of the smaller neighbor. They also argue that if Indian vehicles use Bangladesh's territory, it would curtail the country's freedom. India, with its geographical and locational advantages, might be tempted to draw all kind of mileage from the transit facility. The point they make is that India cannot be trusted, as evidenced by Dhaka's bitter experiences with New Delhi regarding the issue of the lease of the Teen Bigha corridor and, in general, the implementation of the 1974 Mujib-Indira Border Agreement. The consequent perennial movement of Indian vehicles is likely to flood Bangladesh's market with Indian goods. Any probable transit agreement is suspected of being another Indian attempt to lock- in Bangladesh, like the now- lapsed 25 years Friendship Treaty. It is feared that transit facility would make India's influence and trade interests in Bangladesh so predominant that it might lead to virtual deconstruction of the partition of 1947. India might abuse/ misuse the transit facility for military purposes. It is suspected that India would send troop to its north-eastern states in order to suppress the insurgency movements there. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Indian troops might penetrate into Bangladesh. Finally, a related fear is that, in the event of an India- China war, India might very well occupy Bangladesh in order to wage the armed conflict (Peter 1996).

It is clear from the aforementioned that, in relation to the transit issue, Bangladesh shows relative gains sensitivity: that it is fearful of Indian dominance and loss of sovereignty, that it mistrusts India, and that it feels vulnerable to Indian motives and military action under certain eventualities. An uneasy deep- seated and lingering feeling in Bangladesh is that India is deliberately not doing anything to reassure Bangladesh. Such studies inertia on India's part might be explained by her self- confidence borne out of a sense of impunity in a big power-small power framework. The result is that there is no tangible progress in matters of cooperation on the transit issue between Bangladesh and India.

Export of Bangladesh's Natural Gas to India

Bangladesh is reported to have plentiful reserves of natural gas. Several international oil companies were engaged in exploration and exploitation activities here, and there was international pressure for export of gas from Bangladesh to India. Most Bangladeshis do not have access to gas and they seldom enjoy the benefits of development derived from various forms of gas use. As such, the issue of gas export became a hotly debated national issue in Bangladesh. There were three concerns here: whether Bangladesh has sufficient gas for export in the first place; if yes, whether it should be put to domestic use first, including household use and industrialization; and whether a strategic resource like natural gas should be exported to a big, powerful neighbour like India, with which the relationship has not always been congenial (Jayapalan 2000).

Bangladesh had, however, agreed to join a tri- nation gas pipeline transit scheme. Bangladesh, India and Myanmar agreed to cooperate in gas exploration and an overland pipeline project to pump offshore natural gas from western Myanmar to energy hungry India through Bangladesh. Bangladesh added some conditions for allowing gas pipeline to pass through its territory. It wanted a trade corridor and power transit from Delhi, Bangladesh's access to the low- cost hydroelectricity of Nepal and Bhutan, using India's power grid, and a trade corridor to the Himalayan kingdom through Indian Territory (Nair 2008). The arrangements would also provide for measures to reduce the trade imbalance between India and Bangladesh. It is significant here that Bangladesh agreed to cooperate with India on a project on a gas pipeline in a multilateral framework. In this way, Bangladesh felt more comfortable and expected to reduce its relative gains concerns. Also, Bangladesh attempted to reduce her sensitivity by seeking to address an important bilateral problem with India, while opening up new vistas of possible cooperation with two other regional countries. Bangladesh thus attempted to establish trans- issue linkages as a price for cooperation with a vastly asymmetric neighbour. Clearly no Bangladesh- India issues are purely economic; they are viewed through the prism of national security and strategic lenses (Mukherjee 2008).

Issue of Climate Change Impact between the two countries

The impact of climate change is marked in different parts of the world, including in India and Bangladesh. There is the increased frequency and erratic seasonal patterns of cyclones and typhoons. The frequency of floods, drought and river erosion will also be higher in future.

Bangladesh is disadvantaged by its geography: it is constituted by the delta of three great rivers which make the country vulnerable to coastal and riverside flooding, besides cyclones and storms. As half its total landmass is less than two meters above sea level, millions of people face displacement. Scientists predict that Bangladesh can lose 20 percent of its land to sea level rise over the next 90 years; displacing 20 to 25 million people (Warrick and Barrow 1992). As Bangladesh has very limited high land to which people can move, migration to India becomes the next option. With India facing its own population pressures in low-lying coastal areas, this new scenario throws up challenges for both governments.

Trade

Trade and commerce have remained a bone of contention between Bangladesh and India for many years. Although the volume of trade has increased over the years, the balance is always to the Indian side. Bangladesh's trade and its imbalances with India, from the start remained at the top of Dhaka's agenda. India is an important trading partner of Bangladesh and bilateral merchandise trade between the two has been growing steadily in recent years. There has been a massive increase in the exports of Bangladesh to India. This increase in exports has largely been to north-eastern states.

Table 2.4 - Across the Border: Indo- Bangladesh Trade

Year	Export	Import	Total Trade
2007-2008	2,923.70	257.02	3,180.74
2008-2009	2,497.87	313.11	2,810.98
2009-2010	2,433.77	254.66	2,688.44
2010-2011	3,500.00	400.00	3,900

Value in \$ Million

Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry (iitrade.ac.in)

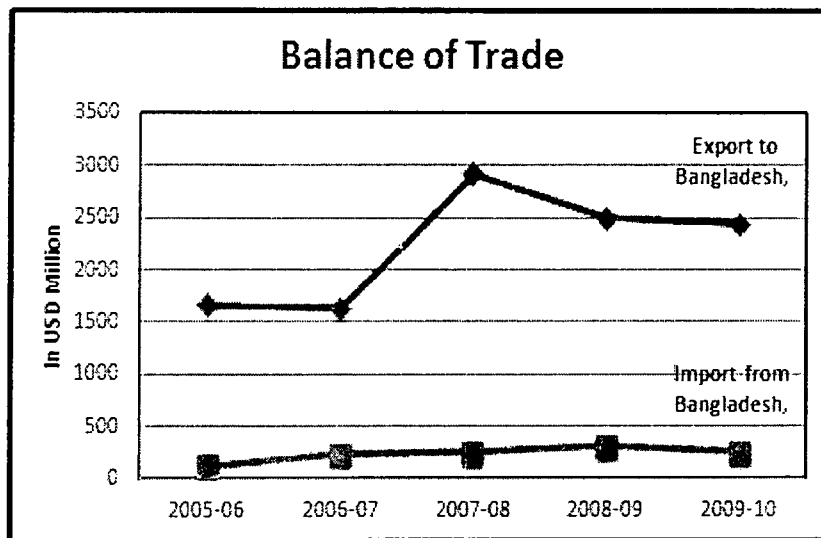
Bangladesh has maintained a steady position in asking India to provide greater access to the Indian markets for its goods. India responded positively at times in the past to Bangladesh's request for duty free access to the Indian markets. Earlier duty free treatment were granted to selective products or to those products which do not have much export potential, as such

much benefit could not be derived from any such concessions. However, India has recently announced duty free access to 46 textile items (ready-made garments is the major exportable goods for Bangladesh) from Bangladesh which is to give a much needed boost to Bangladesh-India trade cooperation (Chakraborty 2011). Duty free access, reduction of the sensitive list or any other steps taken in this regard would no doubt help in reducing the trade gap between the two countries. However, Bangladesh believes that until and unless the para-tariff and non-tariff barriers are completely removed, the trade cooperation will be way below its potential. (Economic Statistics from Global Insight, Bangladesh Executive Summary, 2003)

Related to trade and economics is the issue of trade and connectivity. This is an area of mutual interest to both countries. India wants transit facility in Bangladesh to connect to her North-Eastern parts. Bangladesh wants transit facility in India to have access through land routes to Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan. In addition, Bangladesh is likely to earn revenue through the development of such land connectivity.

The other major issue is the level and nature of economic engagement between the two countries. *Bangladesh has always expressed unhappiness over the large trade deficit in favour of India.* In order to address the concerns of Bangladesh, India has liberalized non-tariff barriers to facilitate the import of Bangladeshi garments. Also India has started a scheme in 2008 to provide duty free access to the imports from the Least Developed countries. Bangladesh is the beneficiary of this scheme. India has also pruned her negative list of trading items from 700 to 400. India is seriously implementing the SAFTA mechanism, which came to force in 2006 (Srinivasan 2002). This will improve trade relations between the two. These measures will improve investment between the two countries. India is also playing an important role in infrastructure development and human resource development in Bangladesh. India has committed a credit line of 4 billion to Bangladesh for the development of railways, dredging of rivers and other such facilities. India's development partnership is facilitated by a friendly regime in Bangladesh, but its long term future is uncertain (Kumar 2011).

Graph 2.1 - Balance of Trade between India and Bangladesh



Source: Jayant (2011), “Indo- Bangladesh Relations: A New Chapter”, *In search of my dreams*,

URL : <http://jayant-insearchofmydreams.blogspot.in/2011/10/india-bangladesh-relations-new-chapter.html>

But for Bangladesh the issue of trade and the deficit thereof has been a matter of political use and accusation. It has consistently used the trade deficit for political purposes, the usual accusation being made by either of the two main political parties that the other has ‘sold out’ the economy to India, or acquiesced in India converting Bangladesh into a ‘captive market’.

The second fact is that given the diversity of India’s productive capacity and the limits of that of Bangladesh, the trade deficit would continue, perhaps in unabated form. The reason behind this situation is that the country has not developed an efficient and dynamic manufacturing sector. Industrial activity is minimal if not stagnant and of the products 75% comprises textile and garments (Nair 2008).

However, despite this jump in exports, Bangladeshi exporters are still complaining that some non-tariff barriers like mandatory testing required by India, inadequate banking facilities and poor infrastructure at the land ports are hindering Bangladesh’s export growth to India. They also claim that India deliberately tries to stall imports from Bangladesh as its land customs officials are not informed about the preferential market access given to Dhaka by New Delhi. Earlier Bangladesh has not been able to export to India because it had a very small export

basket. Besides, its products were not very competitive internationally. As a result they have not been able to penetrate into Indian economy that is increasingly getting globalised. India has been trying to help Bangladesh and is willing to relax restrictions for Bangladesh even in the areas of restricted categories like readymade garments for which Bangladesh has been insisting (Srinivasan 2002).

Chapter 3

Coalition Politics in India since 1996

Meaning of Coalition Politics

The term 'coalition' is Latin word which is the verbal substantive of coalescere - co, which means to go or grow together. In general the term coalition means temporary combination of groups or individuals formed to pursue specific objectives through joint action. The term 'coalition' is most often used in connection with political parties. Coalition governments which are frequently found in multiparty countries like India, France, Italy and many other countries of the world where no single party is strong enough to obtain an electoral majority. The resulting government usually distributes political posts to the representatives of all coalition members. According to W.H.Riker, "Coalition is used for an alliance or temporary union for joint action of various powers of states and also of the union into a single government of distinct parties or members of distinct parties" (Chander 2004). In strict political sense the term coalition is used for temporary alliance into a single government of various distinct political parties or members of distinct parties. It is usually accepted that a coalition can be possible only within the context and parameter of mixed motives in which both common and mutual interest and conflict are simultaneously present there and direct and govern the course. Political coalitions or political alliances are an agreement for cooperation among different political parties on the basis of common political agenda, for the objective of contesting elections to mutual benefit by collectively clearing election thresholds or benefitting from governmental formations after elections. A coalition government is a cabinet of parliamentary government in which different political parties cooperate. The usual guiding factor for this arrangement is that no party alone can achieve majority in the parliament. During such times, parties have constituted all party coalitions. If a coalition weakens, dismembers or collapses, a confidence motion is held or a vote of no confidence is taken. (Pandey 2010)

Nature of Coalition Politics

1. A coalition implies the existence of two or more than two partners.
2. Coalition is based on the simple fact of temporary conjunction of specific interests.

3. Coalition politics is not a static affair. It is a dynamic affair as coalitions dissolve old coalitions and form new ones.
4. In coalition compromise is the keystone with rigidity being sidelined.
5. Coalition works on the basis of a 'Common Minimum Programme' (CMP).
6. Coalition politics is the highest expression of the politics which means the art of making impossible things possible.
7. Pragmatism and not ideology is the hallmark of coalition politics.

The aim of coalition adjustment is to seize power i.e. to stake its claim for the formation of a ministry or for pulling down a ministry.

Coalition Politics in India

The framers of the Constitution adopted for India a Parliamentary system of government. Political parties obviously were to be an essential instrument for working of this system. Various provisions of the Constitution, of course, provided opportunities for parties to establish, develop and function as in any representative democracy. Nevertheless, right from the time of independence along with the already existing political parties there have been emerging a number of parties of different sizes with different ideologies and programmes, each with its own organizational structure.

Right after independence from the time of first general election there were a large number of political parties. However upto 1977 Indian National Congress was the dominant party. It was the ruling party both at the centre and almost in all the states. It was in 1977 that after independence for the first time Congress lost power in the Centre as also in many states. 1977 elections provided a major step towards party institutionalization and possibilities of emergence of a two party system. As a result of this and victory of a non- Congress party at the Centre for the first time many scholars and observers opined that parliamentary democracy in India had matured and a two party system was in the process. The hope however was short lived. The Janata Party which had come into existence with the merger of four parties rather than emerging a cohesively single party, in its behaviour remained a conglomeration of parties. Result was internal bickering and factionalism that not only became a major hindrance in its performance but also tarnished its image in public eyes. It ultimately led to an atmosphere that proved conducive to its disintegration and

disillusionment of the voters. The party could not remain together even for three years. On the basis of 1980 elections, the Indian party system was again back to one party dominant system. However, it was now different not only from the early party system of Nehru era but also from that of the latter part of the pre- emergency. The dominant party was now identified with the name of the leader (Indira) who had become undisputed leader of the party. Thus in 1980s the Congress (I) dominance in reality was not the dominance of one party all over India and based on a type of politics of consensus. It was a hegemonic dominance because of failure of national level non- Congress parties on the one hand and limited regional support bases of regional parties on the other.

The Parliamentary elections held in 1989 clearly initiated a multi party system at the centre. It transformed the scene at the centre in unprecedented ways. It brought into power a coalition government at the centre for the first time, at least in a formal sense for even the Janata Party government in the late 1970s was substantially a coalition government (Singh and Misra, 2004). Again for the first time the party system at the Centre truly acquired a multi party character for more than two parties became of consequential relevance, in the ninth Lok Sabha. The outcome of the 1991, 1996, 1998 and 1999, 2004 and 2009 polls have further strengthened this situation and showed a clear trend of decline of Congress hegemony and emergence of multi party system and a coalitionist phase (Bhuyan 2007).

The new system, at least for the time being, has thrown up a dynamism in which *major parties or party like formations – the Congress and its allies, the BJP and its allies seem to be almost equally poised for competition. The Left and regional parties may play a balancing role.* In this multipolarity, Indian politics has entered a coalition phase.

During this coalition phase especially since 1996, regional parties have become quite important. In fact in several states in India, the largest non- Congress political parties are specific to a single state and have little or no strength outside their home state. The most important such parties are Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, AIADMK and the DMK in Tamil Nadu, the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, the Akali Dal in Punjab, the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, and the Asom Gana Parishad in Assam. In fact, in all these states, the non- Congress state parties have won majorities at one time or the other in legislative Assembly elections and formed governments thereafter. These single state parties are distinguished by their adoption of a regional nationalist perspective, by their political

desire for greater regional autonomy of states in the Indian Union, for their focus on issues specific to their states or for their base within a religious minority (Chander 2004).

One result of the growing influence of regional parties has been that at times no single national party gets majority in the Lok Sabha. *In all the general elections to Lok Sabha from 1996 this has been the situation. This has led not only to formation of coalition governments but also regional parties influencing the process of governmental formation and participating in it.* Though there were coalition experiments in 1977, 1980 and 1990 but demands for greater autonomy both in political and economic sphere was not taken seriously since the mainstream political parties emphasized that such changes will weaken the centre and adversely impact on India's political balance. *The first major step towards greater autonomy was inspired by the United Front experiment of 1996 and 1997.* Due to the consequence of this experiment and its stress on the devolution of greater administrative and economic autonomy to the states, India's centralized political structure witnessed a major shift towards becoming a more federalized entity (Ram 2000). Coalition governments have become an established feature of Indian polity. With these parties demanding to grant more autonomy to states and to transfer a vast majority of centrally sponsored programmes to state governments, regional parties have been successful to a great extent in advancing the cause of federalism. Regional political parties and regional aspirations have been further strengthened with the coming of NDA and UPA coalition depending heavily on regional allies (Raja Mohan 2004). This has both positive and negative effects. In positive terms regional parties provide a check on centralization of power, strengthening of federalism, fulfillment of regional and cultural aspirations of various sections of population thereby helping in national integration, a share in power to marginalized and deprived groups. In negative terms they cause instability of government, lack of unity and coherence for a national government, encouragement to regional and sectional forces, added role of caste and religion in politics. Both these positive and negative effects of regional parties are a natural process in a democratic system. In a country of vast diversities, regional imbalances, concentration of linguistic and ethnic groups in certain regions, along with failure of planning to create a national economy and balanced development growth, development of regional parties is natural. In some countries with federal systems, national parties themselves allow their state or regional wings autonomy enough to represent national aspirations. In India centrally controlled national parties do not

provide such flexibility. This provides another reason for proliferation of regional parties. As a whole regional parties are significant participants in parliamentary and federal democratic system of India. Most of them have no separatist or secessionist agenda. Not all regional parties are cultural or regional based parties. Some are definitely class and ideology based (Kashyap 1997) But in terms of support base and role in politics it is the parties representing specific regional or socio- cultural interests that have emerged important. All these parties have formed governments in their respective states several times either by themselves or in coalition with others. Some of them have stronger roots among masses, compared to some national parties. It is because of this that with the decline of one party dominance, in several states actual and potential opposition and alternative to Congress has been provided by regional parties. They now share power at the Central government as partners of one or the other alliance or front. This process seems to be the pattern at least for the near future.

Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Implications

Foreign policy, being a dependent variable, is conditioned by several factors, of which domestic factors are particularly significant. The domestic sources of foreign policy are so many that the task of tracing the process that enables them to shape policy constitutes an important theoretical and empirical challenge. This is especially true for a state like India, whose most pressing problems are often domestic. S. D. Muni noted that India's policy towards its immediate neighbours is likely to face serious challenges "from internal turbulence in those countries and in India itself". The foreign policy of India is a projection of its geographical, economic, socio- cultural, historical and political compulsions in international politics. Among these factors, *the domestic politics, the policies of ruling party, the state compulsions etc. are determining factors. These compulsions are most vividly reflected in its policy vis-a-vis Bangladesh* (Muni, 1993).

Several influential scholars, such as Morgenthau, Gibson, Modelski, Northedge, Haas, Whiting and Appadorai, have emphasized the significance of national interest as the goal of foreign policy (Appadorai 1981). Implicit in this assumption is the belief that foreign policy is above and beyond the partisan politics of a country. James N. Rosneau's view, for example, that foreign policy is an adaptive behaviour, typically represents this belief. However at a fundamental level, the classical view about national interest ignores the following questions: whose national interest are we talking about within the state? It is possible that given how

vague the concept is, each government or elite group may so interpret a country's national interest as to serve its own interest. For example, the effects of a defense programme may trickle down to some among the rural unemployed or the marginalized urban populace. However, its primary benefit would go to the military of the country or to a foreign firm, in addition to middlemen (Baladas 1996).

Unlike the proclaimed goal of foreign policy that is national interest- the reality is that leaders are often more concerned with their own survival or the interests of their regime. Under certain circumstances, such as in a stable democratic political system, the need to use, as well as the space to utilize, foreign policy for the sustenance and survival of regime in power is far greater than in an authoritarian political system. Indira Gandhi, for instance, utilized foreign policy as a tool to seek legitimacy during the emergency. Often, the regime's interest need not necessarily clash with national interest. For instance, Indira Gandhi's interest in political survival, as well as national interest, dictated a friendly policy towards the erstwhile USSR after the Congress split in 1969 (Kashyap 1997). Mamta Banerjee of Trinamool Congress, for example in order to protect and promote West Bengal state's interest compromised the national interest in pushing ahead the much awaited Teesta deal and subsequently grant of transit rights to India. *The coalition politics in this sense is opportunistic based and sometimes rather it has become a norm as witnessed since 1996 that the national party leaders have to compromise at times certain national interests in the foreign policy decision making in the process of bargaining with the regional party leaders who are the coalition partners under the pressure or in other words emotional blackmail of withdrawing support* (Ram 2000).

The unclear conceptualization of the nature of regimes as a factor influencing foreign policy strikes at the very foundation of the classical approach, which ignores the fact that in the name of national interest, a state's foreign policy is actually formulated by individuals in power. This approach also underestimates human characteristics, such as fickleness and the errors of decision- makers. It excludes the complexity of state- society relations and the different aspects of the decision making process. If every decision maker were to act with rationality, hardly any decision would fail. This, however, is rarely the case. It is therefore necessary to go beyond the classical view and ask several questions. How many individuals are capable of viewing the world in a totally objective, unbiased manner? How many individuals undertake the effort to spell out goals and to come to grips with the often

agonizing choices between equally desired but mutually incompatible benefits? How many have the time to carefully consider all conceivable options, or possess complete information to arrive at the best possible solution? These questions are particularly important in Third World countries such as Bangladesh that have weak institutions, where policy processes are usually personalized and where governments change without change in the overall framework of the political system. Although not the sole factors conditioning foreign policy, the influence of the leader and the nature of the regime should not be overlooked in any worthwhile analysis of foreign policy (Majeed and Hamdard 2000).

There is considerable ambiguity about immediate gains and long-term gains of a foreign policy move. While dealing with South Asian neighbours, including Bangladesh, Indian governments led by Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, for example insisted on reciprocity on their part, while the non-Congress regimes of I.K.Gujral and Atal Bihari Vajpayee attempted to improve ties with them without insisting on strict reciprocity in order to serve India's long term interests (Bhuyan 2007).

The political system and processes of a state have significant bearing on its foreign policy. It is generally assumed that the foreign policy decision-making process in an authoritarian political system differs from that in a democratic system. As the decision-making power in the former rests with an individual, decision can be made quickly in accordance with the will of the person and clique in power. Democratic political systems, on the other hand, have a far more complicated decision making process, where the views of several constituencies are usually taken into account before arriving at any decision.

This chapter therefore focuses on how India's foreign policy has become a device to serve interests of a particular section, group, or political party in domestic politics. Often, there is a good fit between the interests of the domestic ruling elites and their external patrons, even though such policies might be at variance with national interests, and not surprisingly successive regimes have willingly accepted a dependency relationship to remain in power, or conversely, to deny power to their political opponents. In order to study the relationship of coalition politics on foreign policy, it is necessary to understand the nature of coalition politics in India.

Coalition Governments since 1996

United Front Government

After Atal Bihari Vajpayee government fell in 13 days, other political parties came up to meet the solution. With 140 seats, the Indian National Congress refused to form the government and with the Communist Party of India (Marxist) decided to give outside support to a coalition with Janata Dal at its head, named the “United Front”. Other members of this front comprised the Telugu Desam Party, Asom Gana Parishad, Dravida Munnetra Kazgham, Samajwadi Party, Communist Party of India, Tamil Maanila Congress (Chibber 1999). The United Front government was a minority government with the support of the Congress Party. Formed in India after 1996 general elections, it was a coalition government of 13 political parties. During its two year tenure, this coalition formed two governments between the period of 1996 and 1998. After Jyoti Basu and V.P.Singh declined, the sitting Chief Minister of Karnataka, H.D.Deve Gowda was called to head the coalition as Prime Minister with the approval of the Congress and CPI (M). His tenure was from 1 June, 1996 to 21 April, 1997 (Kashyap 1997). Due to some misunderstanding over communication between the Congress and coalition, the Congress withdrew its support to Gowda. It compromised to extend support to a new government under Inder Kumar Gujral, who remained the Prime Minister from 21 April, 1997 to 19 March, 1998 (Raghuraman 2003).

Mr. I.K.Gujral, the External Affairs Minister, under this government who later on became the Prime Minister in April, 1997 (Dixit 2002), was more or less solely responsible for the foreign policy of the country. He basically continued the policies of the Narasimha Rao government. However, Mr. I.K Gujral outlined a border regional policy which came to be known as Gujral Doctrine. He was willing to go the extra mile to resolve problems with neighbours without insisting on reciprocity. *The Gujral Doctrine* was based on five on five principles:-

Firstly, with neighbours like Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka India did not ask for reciprocity but would give all it can in good faith and trust.

Secondly, no South Asian country would allow its territory to be used against the interest of another country of the region.

Thirdly, none would interfere in the internal affairs of another.

Fourthly, all South Asian countries would respect each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Fifthly, all of them would settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations (Gujral 1997).

This doctrine was different from the India doctrine which was talked about in 1980s, which conveyed to the neighbouring countries that India will not tolerate any action by the outside powers in its neighbourhood that were considered harmful to its own interests and survival (Gupta 1983).

Broadly, the Gujral doctrine implied that India was prepared to extend unilateral concessions to its smaller neighbours. This policy was dictated by three factors. Firstly, the economic imperatives forced India to follow this policy. India, having launched itself on the path of economic reform, had realized the importance of regional cooperation among the countries of the Indian subcontinent. Secondly, it realized that it could not fulfill its aspirations of becoming a global power as long as it was involved in regional conflicts. Thirdly, there had been a gradual increase in the influence of U.S.A and China in India's neighbourhood. Therefore, the Gujral doctrine was dictated by India's self interest and real politic.

The most important priority of the United Front Government was to strengthen relations with neighbouring countries so as to provide a stable and peaceful environment for the socio-economic progress of the people. The main focus was to create an atmosphere of trust and cooperation in relations with India's neighbours in South Asia, so as to provide a peaceful and stable atmosphere conducive for socio-economic development. To provide a strong foundation for rapid economic growth in the South Asian region as a whole on the basis of goodwill and mutual benefit, India took several initiatives, both bilaterally with South Asian neighbours and within the SAARC framework. Particular attention was paid to regional cooperation which would bring economic benefits to the population of the entire region.

India's relations with Bangladesh were significantly enhanced during the tenure of the United Front Government. During the visit to India by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in December 1996, the long outstanding issue relating to the sharing of water resources was resolved through the signing of a landmark Treaty on Sharing of the Ganga Waters at Farakka. The Treaty will run for thirty years and will meet minimum needs of both sides. The visit by the Indian Prime Minister to Bangladesh in January 1997 consolidated the enhanced bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh. Fresh impetus had been given to economic and commercial cooperation between the two countries. The Government of India decided to

extend tariff concessions and remove quantitative restrictions on the import of goods in 14 sectors of interest to Bangladesh. Water sharing arrangements established by the 1996 Treaty on Sharing of the Ganga Waters at Farraka were implemented in a spirit of mutual understanding during the first post- Treaty lean season. India and Bangladesh decided to commence discussions on sharing arrangements of the waters of other common rivers. Dialogue at P.M.'s level was maintained through meetings between the two Prime Ministers in Male, Calcutta, Edinburgh and Dhaka (Salman and Uprety 2002).

In a period of constant change in the global political, economic and security environment there was a need for constant monitoring and assessment of the emerging situation, with a view to protecting India's vital national interests. The changing scenario also offered many opportunities. It was the United Front government's endeavour to fully utilize these opportunities to promote and safeguard India's interests. Changes in the global economic situation necessitated a reassessment and strengthening of India's economic diplomacy. The 1990s witnessed profound transformation in the international political, strategic and economic environment, throwing up fresh challenges to India's foreign policy (Jana and Sarmah 2003). India sought to respond optimally to the dynamic emerging situation, and to safeguard and promote its national interest in relation to the outside world, deriving strength from the time tested principles it had followed in conducting its external relations and its new perspectives and initiatives. In the era of globalization, economic diplomacy continued to be accorded high priority, with the objective of attracting higher foreign investment in sectors of priority to India and ensuring equitable transfer of technology and in general in strengthening its economic and commercial links with the rest of the world. India continued to play a leading role in the international fora, where it worked closely with other developing countries on issues of common interest to the developing world. The collective voice of the developing countries found reflection in many of the programmes of action decided upon at international level. In the international forum, the government continued to project India's principled stand on various issues. (Gujral 2003)

The United Front was a weak minority government dependent on the outside support of the Congress Party and it was not in a position to take any major decisions, therefore it basically continued the existing policies, adopting a consensual approach. With the collapse of this government, fresh elections were held and United Front lost power.

National Democratic Alliance Government

After the fall of United Front government, a cohesive bloc of political parties combined themselves to form the National Democratic Alliance headed by the BJP, and Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was sworn in as the Prime Minister of India. The NDA succeeded in proving its majority in Parliament. But however this coalition was short lived. Towards the end of 1998, with the AIADMK withdrawing its support from the 13 month old government, the government lost the vote of confidence motion by a single vote. Thus during 1996 and 1998, there was a period of political fluctuation and flux with government being formed earlier by the right wing nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) followed by a left- leaning United Front coalition (Gaur 2005).

After the failure of four coalition governments and subsequent two mid- term elections, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was sworn in as the Prime Minister of India for the third time on October 13, 1999. With the support of several other cohesive political parties BJP formed the National Democratic Alliance and became the first non- Congress government to complete a full five year term. It secured a comfortable and stable majority. The BJP proclaimed its foreign policy goals “as:-

1. To give India a role and position in world affairs commensurate with its size and capability.
2. To promote sovereign equality among nations. The BJP rejects all forms of political and economic hegemonism and is committed to actively resisting such efforts.
3. To vigorously pursue endeavours for India to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. The existing arrangements in the UN are tilted in the favour of certain countries to serve their narrow interests and it is committed to the reform of the UN.
4. To re- orient Indian diplomacy to our economic and commercial goals and to ensure that our missions abroad play a more active and supportive role in meeting these.
5. To ensure greater coordination between the ministries and agencies responsible for external affairs, defence, finance, international trade and our external and internal intelligence.
6. To promote greater regional and civilizational relationship and strive for Asian solidarity in general and the development of South Asian Association for Regional

Cooperation in particular. Integral to this would be renewed efforts to improve bilateral relationships with all neighbouring countries without any third party mediation or interference.

7. To have greater interaction with more African nations and to build ties with our traditional friends like Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
8. To place relations with USA based on mutual respect, shared values and congruence of interests.
9. To further develop the long and traditional relationship with Russia by increased cooperation in trade, technology, defense and other security related areas.
10. To strengthen political and economic relations with the European Union, Asian countries, Japan, South Korea, South Africa, Iran, The Arab Nations, Israel, Central Asian Republics and fellow Commonwealth Nations.
11. To take active steps to persuade Pakistan to abandon its present policy of hostile interference in our internal affairs by supporting insurgent and terrorist groups. The BJP affirms unequivocally India's sovereignty over the whole of Jammu and Kashmir, including the areas under foreign occupations.
12. To improve relations with China by seeking speedy resolution of the outstanding border problem. To seek greater cross- border trade and cooperation in other areas. Concerned about China continuing transfer of advanced weapons and technologies to Pakistan as this has vital bearing on ties with China.
13. To support a united Sri Lanka within which the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people should be fully accommodated. The BJP greatly regrets the continuing bloodshed particularly since the Indian people have long standing, traditional and fraternal ties with the Sri Lankan people.
14. To maintain the unique, warm and friendly relations with Nepal with which India has the closest cultural, religious and historical ties. To widen existing areas of cooperation and also develop new avenues of fruitful cooperation. BJP recognize in particular the great scope for increasing cooperation in the energy and environment related areas.

15. To further improve relationship with Myanmar with which India has a long border and age- old cultural, religious and historical ties. There is much scope for greater cooperation in the fields of defense, security, economy and culture.
16. To further consolidate the close and friendly ties between India and Bhutan.
17. To reinforce the improving relations with Bangladesh but however to continue to view with concern the unabated illegal infiltration into India from that country and will seek the active participation of the Bangladesh authorities in curbing this; and
18. To take an active role in seeking early and peaceful resolution of the Afghan conflict particularly since its continuance has adverse security implications for India and the development of trade and economic cooperation with countries in the region". (Jha 2002).

Thus India conveyed to its smaller neighbours that they would have to recognize India's primary interest in the region. However many believed that India lacked sufficient strength to enforce it (Sridharan 2006: 80).

In Atal Bihari Vajpayee's address at the Third SAARC Information Ministers' Conference on November 11, 2003, it was echoed that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government (1998–2004), headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, pledged to work towards a 'strong India' that was recognised as an 'autonomous power centre in the world' and to stop 'bending under pressure' to neighbouring countries and big powers. In the official pronouncements of this time one detects echoes of the Gujral doctrine urging neighbours to shed their inhibitions and 'participate in India's economy, rather than be apprehensive about it' and work towards a South Asia 'unshackled from historical divisions, and bound together in collective pursuit of peace and prosperity' (Speech by External Affairs Minister Ashanti Sunhat at Harvard University on September 29, 2003).

Vajpayee spent more energy in shaping India's relationship with Pakistan than with any other state in the neighbourhood. He undertook his famous bus journey to Lahore in February 1999 and visited the Minar-e-Pakistan, which had tremendous significance in the sense that it was interpreted as the right-wing BJP's acceptance of Pakistan as a sovereign entity.

The NDA government could perhaps not devote as much attention to other neighbours because it was preoccupied with other issues. Nevertheless, it tried to extend the hand of friendship to the government of Khaleda Zia in Bangladesh, overlooking the post-electoral

violence committed against the Hindu minorities in 2001. It was during this period that the neighbourhood received its due attention from the strategic community (Swain 2001).

United Progressive Alliance Government

In pursuance of the results of general elections held in India in May 2004, the Indian National Congress emerged as the single largest but due to the lack of majority of its own, formed the government with the support of communists and other allies. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was replaced by Dr. Manmohan Singh who became the new Prime Minister of the country. The alliance successfully completed its entire term of five year and retained the power after the 15th general elections in May 2009. Although the Left now no longer supports the United Progressive Alliance but due to the support of the new allies it has been able to extend its lead in Lok Sabha. The declared foreign policy objectives of Indian National Congress were:-

1. The Congress is opposed to the use of force in international relations.
2. It is opposed to the interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states.
3. It favours total elimination of nuclear weapons as the only sure guarantee against their use.
4. It stands firmly for maintaining friendly relations with all countries of the world based on mutuality of interest and Panchsheel.
5. It strives to improve relations with India's neighbours, especially Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.
6. It believes that any discrimination on grounds of race is an anathema and is against all human values, feeling all forms of apartheid against world opinion and the UN resolutions.
7. It wishes to strengthen the efforts of the UNO in maintaining world peace and security; and
8. It demands India to play a more dynamic, useful, positive and unifying role in international affairs, particularly in narrowing the gap between the developed and the developing countries and in ensuring enduring peace and equitably distributed prosperity in the world (Speech on the Foreign Policy Resolution of Congress in its 83rd Plenary Session, 2010).

The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government led by the Congress party, since May 2004, has continued with the policy of inviting the neighbours to share the economic prosperity of India. *It has laid emphasis on connectivity and the building of mutually beneficial relations with neighbours and showed its enthusiasm to deepen intra-regional trade and to enhance the prosperity of the South Asian region through social development and regional economic integration.* The UPA government entering into framework agreement with Bangladesh is indication of its desire to improve relations with its neighbours at bilateral level (Opening Remarks by Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao at the 38th Session of the SAARC Standing Committee at Thimpu, February 6, 2011).

Ideological Orientations and Foreign Policy Perspectives of Political Parties in India

Patterns of Political Adjustment since 1996

The rise of coalition government particularly under H.D. Deve Gowda in 1996 has fundamentally altered the electoral context of Indian government and politics. Regional and state parties began to determine to a great extent as to who would rule in Delhi. These regional parties like the Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, AIADMK and DMK, Akali Dal, TDP had nothing to offer a significant grand strategic thinking, indicating the limited electoral and voter appeal of foreign policy in India. Except some region specific policy demands like of Bangladesh in West Bengal and of Sri Lanka in Tamil Nadu, the regional parties have been a kind of absent players in foreign policy making leaving much of the dominant foreign policy debates in the hands and control of the Congress and Jana Sangh (BJS, BSP), with occasional interventions by the CPM/CPI and Trinamool Congress from West Bengal and Kerala strongholds. The coalition governments of 1996-1998 were all weak coalitions of national and regional parties (Cohen 2001). *Except the Gujral Doctrine outlining India's policy towards its immediate neighbourhood, it is impossible to derive any new strategic worldview from their leaders, who hardly prioritized foreign policy in their agendas. Rather, they mouthed the same vague platitudes that had animated Indian leaders for decades.* Lowest common denominator strategic thought was the default, and that default was found in the “strategic core” (Stalingrad and Narang 2012).

Vision of the Hindu Right

The second major shift in Indian strategic thought rose dramatically in salience with the coming of BJP to power in 1998-2004 period. Autonomy, pride and deep suspicion of the prevailing world order prevails in Hindu nationalist writing. The BJP ideology and security policy is far more bigoted, visceral and Hindu than that of the Nehru's Congress, but however the strategic primacy of autonomy pervades in both the discourses (Indiresan 2003). The fundamental ideologues of Hindutva spared some thoughts on broad questions of foreign policy. For example, M.S. Golwalkar writes that "the great fact of national life that self-reliance- swavalambana- forms the backbone of a free and prosperous nation has never been so forcefully brought home to us as at present and that there are no short-cuts for preserving national freedom and honour. Every nation has to plod the hard path of self-reliance and self-sacrifice to reach that goal." He has strongly opposed tight involvement in the United Nations because of its views on Kashmir issue, and considers China and communism as profound threat to Hindu way of life. Golwalkar strongly puts that only self reliance and that too around a particular vision of Hindu practice can produce a strong nation in true sense. The schemes which Hinutva ideologues like Golwalkar have struck have been repeated by liberal and more modernized successor generations of Hindutva foreign policy think tank like Jaswant Singh and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The tenure of Vajpayee as Prime Minister from 1998 to 2004 was of great strategic importance in Indian history, with a test of nuclear weapons, a closer relationship to the US, and accelerated conventional military buildup. (Cohen 2001)

Distrust for the international community and demand and aspiration of recognition of Indian exceptionalism is not restricted to the secular Congress. The phrase of Golwalkar that the strong do not desire the friendship of the weak except to exploit the latter could be found in Congress political thought also. *However as Jacques Hymans put that these two wings are however motivated by different concepts of Indian prestige with Congress being more inward focused (techno- nationalism) and BJP more other focused (opposition nationalism).* However in context of high level strategic behaviour, these two wings of India's political spectrum exhibit the exact same outcome (Hymans 2012).

Vision of the Left

Coalition governments especially since 1996 have given space for regional parties to become important in Indian politics. By and large these political parties have not given clear foreign

policy positions. They are rather locked in tight electoral competition that gives more emphasis on patronage and alliance making rather than the high politics of grand strategy. The impact of coalition politics and regionalization has been ironically to exclude foreign policy from electoral politics as the regional parties themselves are simply not much interested in getting involved in this area. Though cabinet berths have been projected as instruments of coalition building, the dominant foreign policy makers and intellectuals continue from the same earlier social and political strata as before the emergence of coalitions. Though these regional parties have reshaped the Indian political landscape, it had hardly impacted on the ideational terrain on foreign policy. This silent revolution of India and regionalization has yet to make themselves feel in the elite realm of security affairs (Singh 2008).

An important exception in this regard has been India's Left which is concentrated in West Bengal and Kerala. *The Left has a clear foreign policy worldview though in certain areas it overlaps with that of the broader elite strategic consensus, particularly concerning the desirability of autonomy and suspicion of more powerful states.* The Left has been far more pro- China than the mainstream strategic opinion. The Left has particularly pursued its foreign policy agenda most dramatically and noticeably in the conflict over the Indo- US nuclear deal that almost brought down the UPA on the verge of downfall. But as in many other ways, the CPM ability to fundamentally influence the trajectory of Indian foreign policy is very limited (Jaffrelot 2003).

Vision of the Congress and the UPA

Congress is perhaps most aptly characterized as neoliberal rather than defining Indian core foreign policy as strategic autonomy and self-reliance. The focus of the Congress wing of Manmohan Singh is to accelerate India's economic growth to result in global economic competitiveness and to produce a trickle-down effect to alleviate the soaring poverty afflicting hundreds of millions of Indians and the instrument employed for achieving this is a deeper integration with the world economy, particularly with the west (Bajpai 2002: 245–304).

The Nehruvian view that India's focus should be to focus internally and develop indigenously is now in a pitched battle with the neoliberal view that the only mechanism to alleviate poverty in India is to integrate with the world's economic engines, necessarily entailing deeper partnerships and risking vulnerability to states such as the US. As a result, the last six years have witnessed a somewhat schizophrenic approach to international affairs as the battle

is waged within the party; given the structure of India's domestic political institutions. In any such battle the most likely outcome is stagnation or "less" rather than "more" or any radical shift in Indian foreign policy (Staniland and Narang 2012).

Trends in Coalition Politics

The present phase of the coalition politics has noted features. *The great trend among both the national and regional parties is to move away from the strict ideological framework of the party of the left or the right. Although in general, they do profess to stick to their party ideology or at least are known by certain ideological levels. But in their actual programmatic support they seem to be more pragmatic in as much as they are not reluctant to give up their ideological instance or put it on back burner, if that helps gain them a share of political power. Such trend has been witnessed both at the national as well as at the state level and parties are less inhibited to share power or coalesce in government formation with the groups, who till the other day were their bitter political opponents.* Since the resultant coalition alliances are neither 'ideological' nor have any common objective to cement them together, they are merely short term tactical arrangements established by ambitious politicians that are rooted in the exchange of mutual benefits and compulsions of power, the mobilization of electorate is done through a strategy of support to regional cum segmental or ethnic issues without giving overriding support either to national or primarily local issues (Stalingrad and Narang 2012).

The change of Indian government in 2004 to a Congress led coalition generated mixed and confused signals over India- Bangladesh relations due to rhetorical overtone from both the sides regarding professions of friendship and goodwill. Implicit in this assumption is that Congress foreign policy towards Bangladesh will be regional populist foreign policy away from India's national security orientations. *Some in Bangladesh are of the view that the determinants of India's foreign policy under the Congress government are not based on national security and economic imperatives but the compulsions of the Congress Party's own "Indian Muslim vote bank".* This is misconception on the part of Bangladesh government about the thrust of Congress foreign policy towards Bangladesh in the first flush of assuming power. As reported in Indian Express, 2005 however, viewed objectively and from a broader perspective the Congress government is not in a position to overlook the national security considerations and conduct good relations with Bangladesh solely on the determinant that

since India has 140 million Muslims (Jenneke and Chakma 2002), so the government will be determined to re- build good relations with all the Muslim countries. Congress cannot recast its foreign policy on these ungrounded factors.

But the internal politics of the UPA 2 alliance had adversely affected the Indian foreign policy as is evident by failure of India to sign a transit treaty with Bangladesh. After West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's objections on Teesta river water river sharing, Bangladesh resented this last minute scrapping of the interim agreement on Teesta. Consequently this led to the failure on the part of Manmohan Singh to get through a deal with Bangladesh which would allow faster and easier access to its north east through Bangladesh.

However, BJP stalwarts have hardly framed their opinions on complex foreign policy issues such as relations of India with Bangladesh or with Pakistan in recent years. It is only when being on opposition side it has to throw criticism on the government for its soft attitude towards Pakistan or China or being excessively servile to the U.S (Kapila 2004). Besides the languorous approach over foreign policy issues even of the ideologically insignificant regional allies of the BJP led National Democratic Alliance is not encouraging and healthy in developing good and strong relations with neighbours. While dealing with neighbourhood countries, India should not excessively rely on any single individual but in fact consult political actors across the board.

The complexity and nature of coalition politics in India indicate that regional parties support is instrumental in not only forming governments, but also in deciding upon the results of policies and decisions which are of national significance. Economic factors and imperatives necessitate state governments along India's periphery to get increasingly influential and vocal in the formulation of India's foreign policy with the neighbouring countries (Narang and Stalingrad 2012). Since the Indian borders are likely to be either at advantage or disadvantage from domestic foreign investments, their influence over the centre and its policies is also likely to increase. Thus India's rapid economic growth and new economic policy changes has given a new found influence to regional parties resulting in their increasing assertiveness in India's political life. Furthermore, nowadays as partners in coalition regional parties are having disproportionate influence in deciding foreign policy particularly in regard to India's immediate neighbours (Adeney and Saez 2005). The nature and composition of coalition politics has become a powerful factor in shaping of Indian

foreign policy. There is a clear evidence of increasing power of regional parties vis- a vis national parties such as the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress. Though there have been numerous experiments in coalitions but regional parties have played a determining role in the formation and functioning of BJP- led National Democratic Alliance which had ruled during 1998-2004, Congress led United Progressive Alliance government which ruled from 2004 to 2009 and now UPA 2 since 2009.

When National Democratic Alliance was in power, it had to give in on many times to allies such as Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) of Tamil Nadu, the Telugu Desam of Andhra Pradesh and the National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir. The first NDA rather fell due to DMK withdrawal of support. Besides there were differences on the issue of giving more autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir, between the BJP which headed the NDA alliance and the National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir, an important constituent of NDA. Another illustration of this is that the People's Democratic Party (PDP) which was an ally of the Congress party functioned in synchronism with the BJP led NDA. This led it to get its demand for the bus route connecting Sri Nagar and Muzaffarabad. It was unusual that the BJP government, which is considered supposedly tough on Pakistan issue, gave in under pressure and increasing demand (Kapila 2004).

The AIADMK and DMK are only a mere extreme manifestation of a trend being witnessed recently in India where coalition constituents and states bring foreign and security issues to the bargaining table. Actually, the leader of this pack has been the Indian Left for which the United States is a permanent anathema. This had resulted in crisis in UPA – 1 in 2008, when the Left pulled itself out of the coalition because it was against India- US civil nuclear deal (Chakraborty 2012). This move of the The Left was also pitched as much on its belief that nothing good could come out of an agreement with “imperialist” America, as its attempt to cloak the decision in the garb of attacking America for its anti-Muslim policies. The next instance of regional parties first approach occurs when West Bengal Chief Minister and the then UPA coalition partner Mamata Banerjee prevented the Teesta river water agreement with Bangladesh. In September, 2011 on the eve of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka the union government was forced to cast off the signing of a pact that would have ratified a formula for sharing the waters of the Teesta with Bangladesh. As for the Teesta issue, there was expectation that in return for the river water treaty Bangladesh will sign an

agreement to give transit rights to its land-locked north-east. Clearly, while West Bengal may have notionally given up something, there was advantage of the greater good that would accrue not only for the north-eastern states but West Bengal as well the increased trade and commerce that would result from the transit agreement.

As a result of coalition politics and the changing dynamics of Centre- State relations, the role of regional partners in foreign policy has increased for eg. India while taking any decision on Sri Lanka policy cannot ignore the demands of Tamil Nadu's main political entities such as the DMK and the ruling All India Dravida Munnetra Kazgham (AIADMK), especially when it is a constituent of central coalition government. Similarly India's Bangladesh policy cannot be indifferent towards the concerns of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee since UPA is nearly dependent upon Miss Banerjee's Trinamool Congress. Teesta water agreement with Bangladesh was put on hold because Miss Banerjee was not convinced with some of its provisions that were against West Bengal interests. Originally scheduled to be a part of Prime Minister's team on his visit to Bangladesh, she refused ultimately to go. Apart from this India's policy towards Pakistan is heavily dependent on the ruling National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir and PDP. Both these parties have been in persistent support of continuous dialogue and engagement with Pakistan and more porous borders, particularly for trade and increasingly people to people contact (Dixit 1998 :182-193).

A regional political diplomacy has been again brought in the forefront with the gaining up of geographical relevance of Border States in regional connectivity. Since long then, the perception of borders in the South Asian context was formed by the activities of cross border insurgents and the conflicts between nation-states which is reinforced by events such as Mumbai attacks of 2008. With the recognition of importance of importance of geo- strategic benefits, the Border States are viewed differently. As reported in the Indian Express, October 13, 2011 therefore, the current UPA platform provided by Manmohan Singh has encouraged an open approach towards borders in the east and the west. In the east there has been an emphasis on increasing connectivity between Bangladesh and north-eastern provinces. In the west there has been opening of border with Pakistan in Kashmir and two Punjab situated in the then Pakistan. There has been increased connectivity between South Asian neighbours and border regions of India.

The states that are not numerically significant players in a coalition have not been able to play a substantial role in foreign policy initiatives. The north eastern states which have failed to put pressure on the government over opening of borders with neighbouring countries like Myanmar is evidence to this state of affairs. The degree to which regional parties can participate in foreign policy formulation hinges on the numerical relevance to coalition government and the political influence it carries as was the case with DMK in Tamil Nadu and Trinamool Congress in West Bengal.

Chapter 4

Impact on Indo- Bangladesh Relations (1996-2012)

In the history of South Asia, the emergence of Bangladesh as a separate entity is not more than four decades old. The birth of this country as a separate unit was a product of internal differences of East and West Pakistan and other issues where India played a leading role in enabling the struggle in Bangladesh to succeed against Pakistan military might. Since then, in the annals of Indo- Bangladesh relations, there were ups and downs on account of certain issues like migration, sharing of water resources, border demarcation, construction of dams, terrorism, transit facilities etc., which often moved the relations in an oscillating way between sweet and sour ends. This oscillation appeared to be on the upswing or downswing whenever different political parties have been at the helm of affairs in Dhaka or in India. India has witnessed coalition government since 1996. The various national and regional players have played a decisive role in determining Indo- Bangladesh relations. However, the foreign policy of a country seeks to protect and promote its core national interests, even though priorities may vary from government to government. The way coalition politics has impacted and directed India- Bangladesh relations can be explained from the analysis of the relations which existed during that period.

BJP lead National Democratic Alliance

During the brief premiership of 13 days, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee (May 16-28, 1996) followed the policy of continuity in foreign policy of maintaining friendly relations with the neighbours. He did not miss the occasion to convey deep sympathy on behalf of the Government and people of India for the victims of the tornado which struck Tangail district and neighbouring areas on 14 May, 1996 (Foreign Affairs Record of Bangladesh, 1996). The release also stated that the Government of India stands ready to assist the Bangladesh government in its relief and rehabilitation efforts that are underway. There was hardly any significant development or issue which came up during this period.

Regime of United Front and Indo- Bangladesh Relations

Premiership of H.D.Deve Gowda

H.D.Deve Gowda succeeded Atal Bihari Vajpayee as the leader of the United Front and became the new Prime Minister of India on 1 June 1996. Inder Kumar Gujral, became India's new Minister for External Affairs under the new dispensation (Routrey, 2008). In Bangladesh pro- India and Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina assumed office of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and expressed the confidence that Bangladesh would make progress towards greater prosperity and harmony under her leadership. He stated that her appointment provided an opportunity to deepen and expand the ties between the two nations. (Foreign Affairs Record, 1996)

The dividends of good understanding between the two countries started. Bangladesh, perhaps, as a gesture of goodwill changed its earlier stand on Kashmir and has cold shouldered a Pakistani request to politically support Islamabad's stand on Kashmir. The request was conveyed to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed by a letter from Benazir Bhutto which was handed over to the new Bangladeshi leader by the visiting Pakistani Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Shaikh in August 1996 (Indian Recorder, 1996).

The four day visit of Inder Kumar Gujral, India's Minister for External Affairs to Bangladesh in September 1996 came as a major breakthrough in relations between the two countries, particularly on the sharing of Ganga Waters. The Indian Foreign Minister held talks with his Bangladeshi counterpart Abdus Samad Azad (Sinha and Ganguly, 2011). The two sides agreed on the 'broad principles' to resolve the issue of sharing Ganga Water. The water sharing issue was discussed to the satisfaction of Bangladesh side and in the talks priority was given to the issue as Dacca expected a solution to the problem before the onset of the coming lean season in January Almost all the pending issues between the two countries, such as strengthening of trade relations, repatriation of Chakma refugees to Bangladesh from Tripura, demarcation of land boundary and security figured at the talks (Roy 2010).

Politics of Coalition as a factor in Agreement over Ganges and Chittagong

In 1996 Sheikh Hasina government took a calculated and balanced initiative in reaching an agreement over Ganges and Chiitagong. She displayed some understanding of Indian political scene as well as an appreciation of the sincerity and willingness of I.K. Gujral's desire to promote friendship with Bangladesh. She deduced that the prevailing coalition

government of Deve Gowda in Delhi was living on borrowed time and could be toppled at any moment. No prospective government, which may subsequently be elected to office, would have a person as sympathetic to Bangladesh as Gujral. She then decided that in the short time Gujral may remain a key decision-maker in Delhi, it was important for Bangladesh to negotiate the best possible deal likely to be offered by India to Bangladesh on these two outstanding issues. History has proved Hasina right in investing in the political wisdom and friendship of I.K Gujral towards Bangladesh (Sohban 2012).

The politics and compulsions of coalition politics can be seen and analyzed from the personal experience of Rehman Sobhan in his write up in Mainstream journal titled “I.K.Gujral: A Tribute from Bangladesh”.

“I.K.Gujral suggested to me that the Government of West Bengal, then ruled by the CPM, with Jyoti Basu as Chief Minister, needed to be taken on board, since their State was likely to be directly affected by any agreement which reduced, as it must, their share of the Ganges waters. Since the CPM Government was not an active partner in the Janata Dal coalition government, Gujral indicated that there were political sensitivities involved in his persuading them to become party to such an agreement. He accordingly made the quite extraordinary suggestion to me, off the record, that I should advise the Awami League Government to open its own channel of communications with Jyoti Basu’s government, drawing on our shared geography and cultural heritage, to encourage them to participate in the realisation of this historic settlement. I immediately responded to Gujral’s advice and instead of accompanying the Bangladesh team back to Dhaka; I routed myself to return via Kolkata where I had set up a meeting with my old friend, Asim Dasgupta, a well-known economist, who was then the Finance Minister of West Bengal. Here I suggested that given the politically propitious opportunities which had just emerged, he should persuade his leader, Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, to engage him in playing a role in realising this settlement with Bangladesh and that he had Gujral’s blessings to do so. Asim responded very positively to my suggestions and indicated that his leader was not unaware of the mutually beneficial opportunities on offer. The rest, as they say, is history. In an act of exceptional statesmanship and courage for a regime which had just assumed office after spending 21 years in the Opposition, Sheikh Hasina invested her accumulated political capital in reaching an early settlement over the sharing of the Ganges waters. Jyoti Basu displayed similar statesmanship. He delegated

responsibility to Asim Dasgupta (who, as Finance Minister, had little exposure to water issues but enjoyed the full confidence of his Chief Minister) to directly participate in the negotiations with Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina similarly delegated responsibilities to Dr Mohiddin Khan Alamgir, then her Principal Secretary, to work with the Foreign and Water Resources Ministries, to negotiate a solution. Gujral's own statesmanship was then demonstrated by building a consensus for such an agreement, with the principal Opposition parties in the Lok Sabha, led by the BJP. With similar political vision he formally invited the Government of West Bengal to be a party to the negotiations and to permit Asim Dasgupta to lead the Indian team in the negotiations with Alamgir and his colleagues" (Sobhan , 2012).

Thus it is a rare instance in Indian history whereby a state government which was not even a coalition partner at the centre was made party and an important actor in international negotiations which traditionally remains in the domain of the central government. This statesmanship and political vision and foresight of Gujral and Jyoti Basu may be compared and contrasted with the uncooperative attitude and conduct and denial mode of Miss Mamta Banerjee, the current Chief Minister of West Bengal and also to the political incapacity and failure of prevalent Congress government to engage Mamta Banerjee in the dialogue process which has thrown water over the realization of an agreement over the sharing of Teesta water. This wisdom, statesmanship and vision of Sheikh Hasina and I.K.Gujral culminated in the signing of the Ganges Water Treaty in 1996 on the occasion of the state visit by Deve Gowda even though it involved criticism from the opposition parties.

Gujral's move to solve outstanding problems with Bangladesh extended beyond the Ganges to find a long due settlement to the crisis of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where over the past 15 years insurgents from Chakma community were being sheltered across the borders by India (Roy 2010). Hasina once again took stock of the situation and found a willing partner in Gujral. Thus the agreement between the Sheikh Hasina government and Chakmas was made possible due to Gujral's intervention and eventually some pressure on the insurgents by which they consented to lay down their arms and returned to Bangladesh.

Historic Agreement of the Ganga Water Accord of 1996

The dispute between India and Bangladesh was resolved by the historic treaty signed by the Indian Prime Minister H.D.Deve Gowda and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina on 12 December, 1996 at Hyderabad House (Mirza 2004). West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu

of Communist Party of India (Marxist) played a key role in the negotiations and was present with Foreign Minister I.K.Gujral. It was due to his support and non-objectionable attitude that the treaty could get through. The treaty is based on the principles of equity and fairplay, taking into account the interests of both countries. It provided a just and reasonable sharing of the burden of shortage. The treaty will be valid for 30 years with provisions for review after every five years or earlier. The thirty years period will enable Dhaka to plan utilization on an assured and stable basis, mobilizing external resources for the purpose. A distinguishing feature of the treaty is that it speaks of a term solution to the low flow at Farraka during lean season. The present agreement alludes to a long- term solution to water-related problems on the North and North East by involving other countries of the SAARC, such as Bhutan and Nepal, in evolving a proper package for rivers of the region. Provisions have been made to take care that neither Bangladesh nor India or more precisely West Bengal is at disadvantage. Soon after signing the treaty, Gowda went to Parliament and read out its broad outlines in both houses. The signed treaty provided that if the availability of water at Farraka is 70,000 cusecs or less, it will be shared between the two countries on 50-50 basis. If the quantum is between 70,000 and 75,000 cusecs, Bangladesh will get 35,000 cusecs, while India will retain the rest. If the quantum rises above 75,000 cusecs, India will retain 40,000 cusecs while the rest will go to Bangladesh. The lean period for both the countries starts in the first week of January and lasts 150 days. But the leanest period is between the middle of March to the first week of May. In addition, the 10- day hydraulic cycles giving the advantage to India and Bangladesh alternately, ensures that neither side will face a crisis during the period (Indian Recorder, 1997).

The credit for the agreement must go to the Prime Ministers of both the countries but they will be the first to acknowledge the *crucial role played by West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu in helping to clinch the agreement. The West Bengal government had virtual veto powers over the agreement as it is the state that is directly affected.* This was even acknowledged by the then foreign minister I.K.Gujral in the statement he made in Parliament in which he appreciated the constructive role played by Jyoti Basu and his cabinet colleagues in bringing about an improved atmosphere in which the treaty between India and Bangladesh became possible (Statement by I.K.Gujral in the Rajya Sabha on 12 Dec, 1996 on the visit of Prime Minister of Bangladesh to India and the signing of a treaty on the sharing of Ganga Waters).

Sheikh Hasina said in New Delhi that it was Jyoti Basu's visit to Bangladesh that paved the way for the smooth and successful completion of the agreement. "The veteran and astute politician of West Bengal will be long remembered by the people of Bangladesh" (McCaffrey 2003). Jyoti Basu's mission to Dhaka was a success at two levels. First, Basu successfully projected an image of a senior statesman returning to his roots which even the horrors of history could not uproot. In the process he has partly neutralized one of the main barriers in the way of solving bilateral problems and generating a lasting fraternity between the peoples of the two countries. He also presented to the Bangladeshi people a face of India they do not often get to see; that of a secular, forward looking, and progressive minded leader of the masses.

The United Front Government in India could assure better relations with her immediate neighbours. Thus the water agreement has already improved the bilateral relations dramatically. To quote I.K.Gujral, "what a treaty has tried to achieve psychologically is an end to the era of blaming the neighbour for everything that is wrong. It opens anew chapter in South Asian Cooperation and also the realization by the neighbours that they will only gain by cooperation" (Gujral, 2003). The signing of the treaty was welcomed in New Delhi and Dacca. The last agreement on water sharing lapsed in 1988 (Wirsing et al 2012). Bangladesh claimed that owing to lack of water, especially during the lean season, it incurred losses running to billions of dollars. It was claimed that the reduced flow of Ganga water through Bangladesh had resulted in heavy silting and consequently flooding; that decreased soil moisture had led to increased salinity and desertification and that the reduced water flow had caused water shortages to industry and agriculture. The increased saline intrusion also reportedly damaged mangrove forests in the coastal areas (Avtar 2003). The general reaction in Bangladesh seems to be one of relief that the water problem has been solved at last. The treaty is of great significance and will influence bilateral relations between the two countries for many years to come. *Though most parties seemed happy about the outcome of the week-long negotiations, the Bhartiya Janata Party raised objections. The then BJP President L.K.Advani, termed it as detrimental to the interests of the riparian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh* (Parva 2010). There have been complaints in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh that their needs have not been kept in mind in the treaty. Insofar as this arises from resentment at the importance given to West Bengal and its Chief Minister in the negotiations, it could be

discounted. But the Left Front Government of West Bengal was happy with the treaty and said that it was in both countries best interest. On the other hand, the general secretary of the worker's party of Bangladesh, Rasheed Khan in a message to the CPM General Secretary stated that it was the decisive and the leading role of the Left Front government and Jyoti Basu that helped to find out an amicable solution to the water problem (Mccaffrey 2003).

West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu dispelled fears that the agreement will be detrimental to the state's interests in the long run. He made clear that this was the first time that the agreement incorporated a provision under which the state would receive 40,000 cusecs a day seven times during the lean period, and a guaranteed minimum of 35,000 cusecs three times. Given the assured supply of water navigability in the Calcutta port would improve (Ahmed 2004). The Central government also gave an assurance that the Calcutta Port would henceforth do a more efficient job of dredging and de-silting. West Bengal industry expects trade with Bangladesh to increase and believes that the entire eastern region will benefit. Fears that agriculture in the state could be affected are misplaced according to an expert. The Director of Agriculture in the state government was quoted as saying that most of agriculture in West Bengal is dependent on large scale surface irrigation projects like the Damodar Valley Corporation, Mayurakshi and Kansabati (Avtar 2003).

Regime of National Democratic Alliance and Indo- Bangladesh Relations

Premiership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee

With the help of pre and post election alliances of political parties Bhartiya Janata Party succeeded in forming the government at the centre and Atal Bihari Vajpayee became the Prime Minister of India who took oath of office on 19 March 1998 (Paul 2010). The new regime inherited a tension free Indo- Bangladesh relation except minor differences on some bilateral issues. Vajpayee's assumption of office was welcomed in Bangladesh. The new Prime Minister, in his first foreign policy pronouncement maintained that his regime will 'strain every nerve' to accelerate the process of building better ties with neighbours. He laid special emphasis on the importance of bilateral diplomacy (Paul 2010).

Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, paid a goodwill visit to New Delhi in June 1998. On the eve of the visit it was made clear that it would be to foster the bilateral ties between the two countries and ruled out Dhaka's mediation to defuse Indo- Pak tension over the nuclear tests. Bangladesh wanted India and Pakistan to talk to each other and settle their

differences. It had no ambition or intention to play any role in Indo- Pakistan bilateral dialogue. The two Prime Ministers held wide- ranging talks on matters of bilateral and mutual interest to further promote better and warmer ties between the two neighbours. This was followed by delegation level parleys on issues covering trade, investment, tariff concessions and cooperation in various fields. The visit had an added importance because *it was the first tour by a foreign dignitary after India exploded its nuclear device on May 11 and 13. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh in course of her talks with the Indian counterpart appreciated India's security concerns and the rationale behind the nuclear tests* (Swain 2001). It was significant for the fact that she is representing a Muslim majority neighbour and is fighting a bitter battle in her own land against the fundamentalist forces that are essentially anti India. New Delhi had reasons to be happy because despite the tremendous political pressure after the Pokhran blasts came out against India on the nuclear issue, she restrained herself and accepted the sovereign right of India to take appropriate measures based on its own security perceptions. Sheikh Hasina had excellent rapport with Prime Ministers H.D.Deve Gowda and I.K.Gujral and if this first meeting after the coming of the B.J.P. government could establish a personal equation between the two, it was a welcome development. As reported in The Times of India, June 23 and June 24, 1998 to facilitate greater trade with India, Bangladesh's Prime Minister in June 1998 inaugurated Bangabandhu Bridge, South Asia's longest bridge built at an estimated cost of \$1 billion over river Yamuna in Bangladesh. India supplied the largest quantum of boulders needed for river training before construction of the bridge work. The bridge would make transportation of goods to and from northern Bangladesh, which has a number of official trade outlets with India, faster and less cumbersome compared to movement of riverine transport.

As reported in The Times of India, June 7, 1998, *another landmark in the development of mutually beneficial relations was the signing of the agreement in February 1998 to begin a thrice- weekly bus service between Calcutta and Dhaka. It would be valid for two years initially and subject to renewal.* Thus the relations during this short tenure of NDA began on a positive.

Second Term of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Indo-Bangladesh Relations

Like earlier the poor performance of the Congress Party in the general election of 1999 created the conditions for the formation of a BJP led coalition government at the centre. On

the side of the ruling coalition were parties like the Telegu Desam of Andhra Pradesh; the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam of Tamil Nadu; the Samata Party of Bihar. Trinamool Congress of West Bengal and many others (Dixit 2001).

India- Bangladesh relations during this period were not much encouraging and did not witness any landmark improvement. Begum Khaleda Zia of the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) became Prime Minister of Bangladesh in 2001 elections for second time. Ever since the BNP government came to power in 2001, Indian commentators, especially those from West Bengal, have shackled that government with radical Islam, anti- India sentiments and actions, anti-secularism, anti-democracy and pro-China policies. This development in the society and politics of Bangladesh over shadowed the relations, political in particular between the two friendly neighbours. As reported in The Independent, April 11, 2002 in 2002 India agreed to provide duty- free access to 40 Bangladeshi items of 16 categories.

But in real terms Bangladesh was not happy as it demanded duty free access of 191 items, within 25 categories (Hussain 2002). The visit of Foreign Minister of Bangladesh in 2002, the first since Begum Khaleda Zia government took over provided opportunities for the countries to review the gamut of their bilateral relations. The two sides discussed ways to remove impediments to the path of increasing trade and bilateral cooperation. Foreign Minister of India Yashwant Sinha made a high profile visit to Dhaka in August, 2002, first such high level visit made by any Indian Minister since Begum Khaleda Zia came to power. He discussed issues like cross border terrorism, concern over the treatment of minority, illegal immigration, gas export and other related issues like trade imbalance, border incidents, and ratification of the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement, transit and transshipment with the Bangladesh government. Bangladesh side demanded duty free status to remove the trade imbalance. The Indian side took positive note of Bangladesh demand and informed that notification of duty free access of 40 Bangladeshi products under 16 categories has already been issued and is effective from 25 August, 2002. Besides, the luxury tax imposed by the West Bengal government on Bangladeshi products was removed (Hussain 2002).

As reported in Bangladesh Observer, November 14, 2002 in November 2002 Bangladesh-India relations turned to frozen. Actually it happened due to a much publicized statement made by Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister of India L.K.Advani about the increase in the activities of ISI and Al- Qaeda after the change of government in Bangladesh. The

Indian government claimed that there were some 99 training camps located in Bangladesh where the anti-India miscreants and insurgents got trained to operate against India. The Foreign Office of Bangladesh reacted sharply on the matter. The Foreign Office summoned Indian High Commissioner to convey its serious reservation about Advani's comment. Bangladesh government declared Advani's statement as baseless, incorrect and motivated. The relations between Bangladesh and India got further deteriorated because Bangladesh banned the import of Indian yarn through land ports in November 2002. Just after the ban was imposed there was a meeting between the two countries at the Commerce Secretary level where the Indian government demanded the lifting of the ban. But the meeting almost broke down on several occasions and was fruitless. This issue along with General Pervez Musharraf's visit to Bangladesh, the change of the route of the Asian Highway by Bangladesh, the Bangladeshi's government's indecision on the export of gas to India and India's resentment at what it perceived to be Bangladesh foreign policy leaning towards China-Pakistan axis made Bangladesh India relations further embittered (Ferguson and Jones 2002). However, Bangladesh Foreign Minister arrived in Delhi in February, 2003 to cool down the situation. He discussed bilateral relations with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani and Foreign Minister. Both the countries talked about the sharing of Ganges waters, the insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the many instances of border problems and a lot more. As reported in Financial Express, July 17, 2003 after a long six year gap, the sixth meeting of the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) between Bangladesh and India was held in July, 2003 in Dhaka. The last meeting of JEC was held in Dhaka. Issues like Indian zero tariff to Bangladeshi products, free trade agreement (FTA), road transit, Dhaka Shealdah train communication and opening of the Dhaka- Agartala bus service were discussed. Finally, the long awaited Dhaka-Agartala bus service was flagged off on 19 September 2003 with the state owned buses from two neighbouring countries crossing into each other's territory at around the same time (Swain 2001). It was the second direct bus service after the one between Dhaka and Kolkata which were commissioned in 1999. The bus services between Dhaka- Kolkata and Dhaka- Agartala are the most convenient form of inter- country transportation for the common people. And with the exchange of visits between more of the middle class citizenry, closer economic, political and socio- cultural relations become inevitable. The inauguration of Dhaka- Agartala bus service was a further step forward in

Bangladesh- India relations. *Indeed Dhaka- Kolkata and Dhaka- Agartala bus services were the positive achievements in India- Bangladesh relations during Atal Bihari Vajpayee regime in India.*

Regime of United Progressive Alliance and Indo- Bangladesh Relations

Premiership of Manmohan Singh

In pursuance of the results of general elections held in India in May 2004, the Indian National Congress emerged as the single largest but due to the lack of majority of its own, formed the government with the support of the communists and other allies. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was replaced by Dr. Manmohan Singh who became the new Prime Minister of the country. Unlike India, Bangladesh did not witness any change of guard and Begum Khaleda Zia of the BNP who took over the premiership of Bangladesh in 2001 continued till 2006 but as a follow up of the provision in the constitution at the close of this year she handed over the reign of administration to a caretaker government to conduct a free and fair national election in 2007 (Roy 2010).

In economic sphere India and Bangladesh took exchange of views on several aspects and the issue of water management between the two countries was one of them. On the sharing of river waters the two countries have a bilateral Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) that was established in 1972 to maintain liaison between the two countries to maximize benefits from common river systems, formulation of flood control works, formulation of proposals on advance flood warnings, flood forecasting and cyclone warning, as also study of flood control and irrigation projects (Chitakara and Sharma 1997). In a post- Vajpayee period a meeting of Joint Rivers Commission took place in Dhaka in 2005. In 2006, the Water Resources Ministers of both the countries jointly visited some river sites in both countries and discussed issues relating to riverbank protection, minor lift irrigation and drinking water schemes. Apart from this on assistance side, India, as always, had stood by Bangladesh in its hour of need with aid worth over Taka 250 crore to help it cope with natural disasters and flood in the year 2007-08 (Singh 2010).

The north- eastern states of India have huge resources and raw materials and these can be exported to Bangladesh. After due processing, the finished products can be made available to the people of the region at much cheaper rates. But unfortunately the attitude of cooperation has not been seen from the side of Bangladesh. The country has negative trade balance with

most countries and use remittances from expatriate Bangladeshis to finance its imports. Bangladesh appears to be obsessed with the trade gap which it has with India. As a result the country has been following policies which discourage imports from India. Despite unwillingness on the part of Bangladesh to cope with the trade gape between the two, India has considered the country as important trading partner and its trade during this period grew with Bangladesh by 145% in these five years. While Bangladesh's imports from India grew by 124% in the last five years, its exports to India grew by 480% in the corresponding period. *As a part of goodwill gesture India extended zero duty excess/ tariff concessions to Bangladesh under SAFTA, SAPTA and APTA* (Nair 2008). It was provided with effect from January 1, 2008 and in pursuant to the announcement made by the Indian Prime Minister at the 14th SAARC Summit held in New Delhi in 2007. This facility was to be applicable to the products originating from SAARC, LDCs, including Bangladesh, except for some items in the sensitive list. Furthermore, with a view to address trade imbalance India has agreed to extend duty free access to eight million pieces of readymade garments from Bangladesh every year under SAFTA (Srinivasan 2002). A Memorandum of Understanding on procedural arrangements was signed in Dhaka in 2007. However the present trading arrangements are governed by the revised India- Bangladesh Trade Agreement signed in 2006. As a further step an India- Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been set up in 2007 which has become a useful platform for exchange of information, promoting greater interaction between business communities from both sides. In sequence in 2007, the Government of India has removed the prohibition on investment into India by citizens of Bangladesh or entities incorporated in Bangladesh, allowing investments that have prior approval of the foreign investment policy board of the Government of India (Sharma 2010). The economic relations and trade in particular between India and Bangladesh suffered because of poor infrastructural facilities.

Several ways were envisaged to improve transit facility and people to people contact between the two countries. As reported in The Indian Express, April 14, 2008 earlier the direct bus service between Dhaka and Kolkata started in 1999 and Dhaka- Agartala since 2003. However, giving a major breakthrough to the purpose *the direct passenger train service was resumed between Kolkata and Dhaka cantonment station in 2008*. It was inaugurated as a follow up of an agreement signed between India and Bangladesh and many people expected

that the train service would substantially contribute to consolidating ties between the two neighbours. The caretaker government council of advisers decided to clear the ways and approved the Indian proposal and with this *the 'Maitree Express'- a friendship train backed on the rails after a gap of forty three years*. Even prior to 1947 there was a regular overnight railway service from Kolkata to Dhaka. It however ceased to operate after the Indo- Pak war of 1965. The railway services between the two neighbours as is expected would expand mass transportation, result in greater interaction between the people not only in tourism terms but also in terms of trade, commerce and cultural exchanges. It has opened a new chapter in India- Bangladesh relations. In 2006 India and Bangladesh signed a bilateral agreement on Mutual Cooperation for Preventing Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

In a major breakthrough, the country had ever witnessed, Sheikh Hasina and her party Awami League along with its allied registered a historic win in the general elections held in 2008. It was held after two years of caretaker rule by an army backed interim government installed in 2007.

Second Term of Manmohan Singh and Indo- Bangladesh Relations

When Sheikh Hasina and Manmohan Singh came in from elections in 2008 and 2009, respectively, both were forward-looking, seeking to do something for the bilateral relationship. *As an outfit of Hasina's emergence as a secular representative and pro- Indian leader, she gave New Delhi a major priority in her foreign policy domain.*

Hasina visited India in January 2010. Hasina's visit was a remarkable success in the regional development. AL and their allies describe it as a historic visit through the opposition BNP was critical. Bangladeshis remain as divided as they were during the liberation war in 1971. In course of Hasina's path breaking visit, she expressed readiness for undertaking and introducing fresh initiatives in matters like overland access, trade, water sharing, among many other issues that had virtually become impossible to talk over the past years and had acquired disproportionate salience in bilateral ties. Though all the issues can not be resolved in one visit but this visit promises to restore and build upon the trust between the two countries on a much larger scale. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had agreed to revisit the 1974 Indira-Mujib pact on land borders and adversely possessed enclaves, promised not to do anything on the proposed Tipaimukh dam on the Barak River which may adversely affect Bangladesh, and

move to resolve river water dispute. There are so many rivers, big and small, flowing from India to Bangladesh. Nature cannot be predicted and the upper riparian stands to be blamed. Small problem will always remain between countries sharing common rivers and common borders. These can be managed if there is mutual trust (Chakrabarti 2010).

Three major initiatives were undertaken by India. First, *there was the US\$ 1 billion credit line to Bangladesh for infrastructure development, the largest single financial aid package to any recipient from India*. Second, amidst the raft of five agreement signed, one on cooperation in the power sector was also included. According to it, India was committed to provide 250 MW of power to Bangladesh every day and third was to reduce the negative list of items imported from Bangladesh and accord it 'zero tariff' treatment.

There are substantial paybacks for India as well. India will be able to obtain access to two Bangladeshi ports, Chittagong and Mongla. This would open up the landlocked Indian northeastern states to the Bay of Bengal. Steps were taken to facilitate transit of goods to Bangladesh from Nepal and Bhutan through India, and between India's north east through Bangladesh. Nepal and Bhutan are also clear beneficiaries as a longstanding aspiration had found fruition. A project to link the Indian state of Tripura to Bangladesh was agreed upon. The upshot of the visit was the 50- paragraph joint communiqué, one of the longest ever issued in recent times (Singh 2010).

The intervening period between the visits of the two Prime Ministers has been interspersed by an array of official level visits from New Delhi to Dhaka, the most noteworthy among which were as follows: the Indian Finance Minister, Pranab Mukherjee's sojourn to Dhaka on 7 August 2010 to witness the signing of the US\$ 1 billion Line of Credit Agreement between EXIM Bank of India and Government of Bangladesh; the then Indian Foreign Secretary, Nirupama Rao visited Dhaka on 6-8 June 2011 for Foreign Office Consultations and held discussions with her Bangladesh counterpart on the entire gamut of existing bilateral ties; External Affairs Minister of India, S.M.Krishna visited Bangladesh on 6-8 July 2011 and held bilateral talks with his counterpart, Dr. Dipu Moni, in course of which, Protocols of Exchange on the Instruments of Ratification of the bilateral agreement on the Protection and Promotion of Investments between India and Bangladesh were signed; Home Minister of India, P.Chidambaram visited Bangladesh on 29-30 July 2011 for delegation level talks with his Bangladeshi counterpart, Ms. Sahara Khatun on all issues of mutual interest and thus

demonstrated the spirit of bonhomie and cordial relations unfolding between the two South Asian neighbours (Choudhary 2010).

As reported in Times of India, September 9 2011 Dr. Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka last September 2011 was not just mark another Indo- Bangladesh summit held in the neighbouring country. What distinguished this trip that it was undertaken along with a group of Indian chief minister is its singular importance. Dr. Singh was the first Indian head of government to lead a high-powered delegation since 1972. A similar visit was undertaken by Indira Gandhi for signing the historic Indo- Bangladesh treaty of peace and friendship. The Prime Minister visit was crucial in both geostrategic and political terms for both countries because it is going to address concerns that have troubled the two neighbours for too long. Fortunately, the two leaders have almost identical mindsets and visions which have helped them reached unanimity on vexed issues. Whether in the matter of exchanging enclaves or adverse possessions or making Bangladesh the connectivity and growth hub of four neighbouring countries, both Prime Ministers have walked the extra mile to look for acceptable solutions.

The timing of Dr. Singh's visit, at a time when Bangladesh's perception of India is changing fast is equally significant. A belief is fast gaining ground among common Bangladeshis that their homeland stands to lose more from Begum Zia and her Jamat's brand of blind anti-Indianism. Continuing with such a negative strategy would lead neither the present opposition nor Bangladesh anywhere. Fifteen years of BNP rule marked by strident anti- India posturing, bear ample testimony to this. Even the coups staged for the installation of an anti- India military junta did not produce the desired result. As reported in The Hindu, September 7, 2011 Bangladesh's perception of India had changed in a big way became apparent in the last parliamentary election when the BNP-Jamat's joint trade against India evoked such a negative response that Sheikh Hasina's Awami League- led coalition posted a landside victory. The average Bangladeshi thinks that the days of blind anti- Indianism are over. The Bangladeshi perception that Dr. Manmohan Singh has to address, rightly and adequately, is that close ties with India will have beneficial spin-offs. For instance, the five agreements that Sheikh Hasina and Dr. Singh signed in Delhi last year evoked so much hope in that country's business community and a large section of the intelligentsia that many began to believe that India held the key to shared prosperity and well- being. During the visit, Manmohan Singh

acknowledged that India was fully aware to the problem of trade imbalance between India and Bangladesh.

Dr. Singh's visit will also give a shape to the idea of turning India's eastern and northeastern region, along with neighbouring Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, into a regional economic and connectivity hub, with Dhaka as the pivot. That is why chief ministers of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram were part of the Prime Minister's official delegation to Dhaka (Sinha and Ganguly 2011). These states are contiguous with Bangladesh. Dr. Singh knows both countries have a convergence interests is promoting and developing this regional connectivity and growth hub as benefits flowing from it will be incalculable and varied.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's last visit to Bangladesh (6 September, 2011) has been a mixed blessing at present, it may mark a new dawn in the history of Indo- Bangladesh relations, and break fresh grounds in bilateral ties in future. Dr. Singh's visit was historic as one of the agreements signed by the Prime Minister of both countries will do away with a particular baggage of partition- the Radcliffe award that led to the division of Bengal. The enclave and adverse possession issues couldn't be resolved so far because of the arbitrariness of the award. The 1974 Indira- Mujib boundary agreement had sought to resolve the issue, but without success. The Manmohan Singh- Hasina entente finally dealt with this post- partition hangover.

As reported in The Statesman, September, 2011 the framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development signed by the two Prime Ministers for enhancing mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation covered a wide range of areas. These include promotion of trade, investment and economic cooperation, connectivity, water resources, management of natural disasters, generation, transmission and distribution of electricity including from renewable or other sources, promotion of scientific, educational and cultural cooperation, people to people exchanges, environmental protection and responding to challenges of climate change through adaptation; sub regional cooperation in the power sector, water resources management, physical connectivity, environment and sustainable development, and enhancing cooperation in security. The Agreement may be amended by mutual consent in order to enhance, deepen and widen the scope of cooperation, including regional/ sub- regional expansion. The Agreement would enable the two countries to realize their shared destiny and common vision through the optimum utilization of opportunities for mutual benefit.

Protocol to the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement

The Protocol to the Agreement Concerning the Demarcation between India and Bangladesh and Related Matters signed between the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh and the External Affairs Minister of India seeks to address all the outstanding land boundary issues and provide a final settlement to the India- Bangladesh boundary. The outstanding issues addressed include (i) undemarcated land boundary in three sectors viz. Daikhata-56 (West Bengal), Muhuri river- Belonia (Tripura) and Dumabari (Assam); (ii) enclaves; and (iii) adverse possessions. The undemarcated boundary in all three segments has now been demarcated. The status of 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh with a population of 37,334 and 51 Bangladesh enclaves in India with a population of 14,215 has been addressed. The issue of adversely possessed lands along with the India- Bangladesh border in West Bengal, Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam has also been mutually finalized. The boundary settlement has been concluded keeping in view the aspiration of the people (Pramanik 2011).

Other Agreements are as follows:-

1. Addendum to the MoU between India and Bangladesh to facilitate Overland Transit Traffic between Bangladesh and Nepal
2. MoU on Conservation of the Sunderbans
3. Protocol on Conservation of the Royal Bengal Tiger of the Sunderban
4. MoU on Cooperation in the field of Fisheries
5. MoU on Cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy
6. MoU on Educational Cooperation between the Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Dhaka University.
7. MoU on Cooperation between Doordarshan (DD) and Bangladesh Television (BTV)
8. MoU between the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), New Delhi and BGMEA Institute of Fashion Technology (BIFT), Dhaka.

(Record of Ministry of External Affairs of India, 2011)

It is now India's turn to act, and act quickly. The people of Bangladesh are waiting to see the gains from this new relationship. There are so many India hater groups in Bangladesh who do not believe to make cordial bilateral relations with India. The worst period in India-Bangladesh relations was witnessed during the BNP-BJI led four party alliance rule from 2001 to 2006. This was the period which saw a sharp rise in Islamic fundamentalism and

terrorism, pogrom against minorities, hosting of Indian insurgent groups like the ULFA and others. Sheikh Hasina thinks these anti-India voices can be subsumed if the common people of Bangladesh benefit from this new chapter of Indo- Bangladesh relations.

However, in spite of the bilateral understanding that developed in course of the two- high level visits, certain issues have still not been resolved and these occasionally have brought temporary clouds in the clear sky of Indo- Bangladesh's evolving relations. There are three such thorny issues, namely the water- sharing of Teesta river; transit facilities through the territories of India and Bangladesh for facilitating trade relations and discord on the Tipaimukh dam and their concomitant implications on the corpus of mutual ties. In fact both India and Bangladesh have emphasized the importance of allowing mutual transit facilities through each other's territories for facilitating trade. On the one hand, while India desires transit facilities to reach out to its northeastern states, Bangladesh engineers its networks to run through neighbouring countries like Nepal and Bhutan in order to develop trade relations. On the other, unfortunately, both the countries have expressed reservations regarding these facilities, stemming not merely from economic considerations, but also taking cognizance of political and security compulsions thus making the issue more complicated and problematic.

Water of Discord- Teesta River

In the history of India- Bangladesh relations, water remains the most important issue between them. It is water, which one can find not only in the literature of Bangladesh, but also in India, with special reference to the connecting rivers in northeast and eastern India. Thus, water has been at the heart of both India and Bangladesh. Unfortunately, it is nature's movement, which has created tension between these two neighbours. Immediately after Bangladesh's independence, a major issue, which resurfaced between the two countries, was the Ganges water distribution. After a long- drawn interaction between the governments of New Delhi and Dhaka, this problem was more or less resolved amicably in 1996. The next water issue, which makes India and Bangladesh share deep concern, is that of Teesta water sharing. India and Bangladesh share a territorial border of 2,979 km and 1,116 km of riverine boundary, with the Indian states of West Bengal, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Assam and Tripura on the margins of the 4,095 km Indo- Bangladesh border (Wirsing and Stoll 2012). This geographical location naturally brings the issue of Teesta water- sharing to the core of bilateral ties. Thus, during Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh in September 2011, the

two leaders welcomed the progress implemented on the principles and modalities of interim agreements on sharing of waters of the rivers Teesta and Feni on a fair and equitable basis, and also directed the concerned officials of both countries to work towards successfully concluding the agreements at the earliest. Besides, Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and Sheikh Hasina expressed satisfaction on the fact that as envisioned in the Joint Communiqué signed during the latter's visit to India in January 2010, not only had dredging of the river Ichhamati along the common reach between Angrail and Kalanchi bridges been completed, but the phased river bank protection works along Mahananda, Karatoa, Nagar, Kulik, Atrai, Dharla, Punarbhaba, Feni, Khowai, Surma etc. were being carried out as well. Interestingly enough, accompanying the Indian Prime Minister to Bangladesh, his entourage included official dignitaries like the External Affairs Minister, S.M.Krishna and Chief Ministers of the states of Assam (Tarun Gogoi), Tripura (Manik Sarkar), Mizoram (Pu Lalthanhawla) and Meghalaya (Mukul Sangma) (Wirsing and Stoll 2012).

However, the Chief Minister of West Bengal- a major stakeholder in the Teesta issue- Mamta Banerjee's absence was conspicuous and demonstrated her protest against the final draft of the Teesta River Water Sharing Agreement, since she argued that the final draft was prepared without her knowledge where the sharing of water interest on part of West Bengal was overlooked. As reported in September 9, 2011 as a matter of fact, though not against the sharing of Teesta waters with Bangladesh altogether, Mamta Banerjee protested against any agreement signed by the Government of India that would provide Bangladesh 25% more water than what was promised to West Bengal, which would adversely affect the districts of Coochbehar, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, North and South Dinajpur. However, Mamta Banerjee refused to make any official comments on the issue. On his part, Manmohan Singh while defending his stance on the Teesta imbroglio and refuting Mamta Banerjee's claim told media personnel during his return flight to New Delhi from Dhaka that the West Bengal Chief Minister had been consulted at every step while drawing up the Teesta water sharing agreement with Bangladesh. Eventually, in the backdrop of this "Yes-No" problem between West Bengal government and the Centre with reference to this issue, the agreement has to be put in the backburner (Chakraborti and Chakraborti 2012).

In this context, prior to the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Dhaka, it was announced that the Teesta deal would remain outside the purview of the visit and would not be signed without

consulting the West Bengal government. *In our federal scheme of things, nothing is done or will be done without consultations with the state government.* Any agreement to conclude will have to be accepted by the state governments and Bangladesh. No agreement will be done without the consultation of the state governments. The non- signing of the water- sharing issue has not only shocked the Hasina government, but also gave space to the Bangladeshi opposition parties to criticize Hasina's inability to sign the agreement with India.

This unresolved problem has provided the Bangladesh government with a bargaining chip vis-à-vis granting New Delhi permission for overland access through Bangladesh to its seven land-locked northeastern states as a measure to expose India's northeast to mineral exploration including oil, gas and coal and be an important step towards realizing New Delhi's ambition of using the region as a connecting point to Southeast Asia. Subsequently Bangladesh has denied overland access after India went back foot on its commitment to sign the water- sharing agreement of the Teesta river (Sands and Peel 2012).

This weakness of India's policy making and the major constitutional problems with reference to Centre- State relations in a federal structure has placed the Indian Prime Minister in an awkward position in the mindset of the Bangladesh government. Consequently Manmohan Singh had to concede to Miss Banerjee's dissenting voice, at the cost of damaging a protracted attempt to elevate relations with Bangladesh to a new high. As reported in India Asian News Service, 2012 this event made it threadbare that in spite of the fact that the Constitution of India puts foreign policy under the purview of the Union List, the leader of the Central (UPA) government could hardly afford to alienate the Trinamool Congress Party (led by Mamata Banerjee), since it is the second- largest constituent of the UPA, holding almost 26 parliamentary seats. *Thus the success of the Teesta water- sharing agreement is inextricably linked to the overland transit agreement between India and Bangladesh.* In an immediate reaction to the non- signing of the Teesta deal, Bangladesh announced that the overland transit agreement as well as its earlier decision to allow access to two Bangladeshi ports- Mongla and Chittagong – for movement of goods to and fro from India through road and rail, would be signed, provided the Teesta deal was signed in the first place.

Thus during this period, Sheikh Hasina's visit in India (January, 2010) and Manmohan Singh's visit in Bangladesh recently (September, 2011) have strengthened the bilateral relations further. It has opened the long waiting door of development in this south Asian sub-

region. Both the leaders are committed to solve the longstanding complex issues like transit, transshipment, corridor, border dispute, enclaves adverse possessions, water sharing of the Teesta and other rivers, smoothen business and trade problems etc. aiming at good neighbourly relations in coming future. They are both committed to South Asian regional regional development.

The pulls and pressures of coalition politics affected Indo- Bangladesh relations in a way that perhaps Mamata's prickly relationship with the Congress also prompted her to adopt a recalcitrant attitude. For instance, when pleading for a special financial package for West Bengal from Finance Minister, Mamata was asked to draw up a budget that could enable her to raise revenues internally too, leaving the Centre to keep its aid to 'reasonable' limits. The subsequent package also fell below her expectations. The Mamata camp also thought that the Congress was being less than honourable in its negotiations. This was because of the attempts of the Congress, which she felt was at Pranab's behest, to include Congress leader and Bengal irrigation minister Manas Bhuiyan in Union water resource minister Pawan Bansal's delegation, which was supposed to sign the Teesta treaty a day before Manmohan was to arrive in Dhaka. Fearing that the treaty was being offered to her as a fait accompli, Mamata firmly told Manas not to join the delegation (Gupta 2012).

Mamata was also wary of the Left, the BJP and even the Congress exploiting the sensitive water issue to push her on the backfoot. There was also talk in the state of Congress leaders initiating a movement against Mamata once she gave her consent to the proposed Teesta agreement. Perhaps this was mere speculation, but a keen sense of survival meant Mamata wasn't willing to provide room, even hypothetical, to her opponents. Mamata's cautious approach was influenced by West Bengal's experience in the years following the signing of the 1996 Ganga Water Treaty between India and Bangladesh. Though then CM Jyoti Basu had given his assent, he soon realised that the sharing of water had adversely affected the flow of the Ganga at Farraka. This was because West Bengal as a lower riparian state couldn't, in the absence of a formal agreement, prevent Uttar Pradesh and Bihar from 'overdrawing' water from the Ganga. In other words, Bangladesh's guaranteed share was ultimately at West Bengal's interests". *The UPA government failed to take its own coalition ally and West Bengal Chief Minister as well as the people of the state in confidence on issue of Teesta waters. No serious efforts were taken to develop some understanding and consensus between*

West Bengal and Sikkim over the distribution of waters of Teesta. Apprehensions in the minds of West Bengal government over the possible starving of agriculture in the northern parts of West Bengal were not addressed. In such a deplorable situation and inept dealing of this matter, the government missed an important opportunity (At Presidential Speech by Nitin Gadkari on 30 September, 2011).

Being embarrassed over the Teesta question, the Indian leadership tried to explain to the Bangladeshi side the pulls and pressures of coalition politics in India which Manmohan Singh has been receiving from his ally Mamata. Mamata was denounced for being temperamental and indulging in political grandstanding at the cost of a historic diplomatic breakthrough with Bangladesh. Some even alleged that she was doing this to build a political base for herself in North Bengal's Malda, Jalpaiguri and North Dinajpur districts, where the Left and Congress have been traditionally strong (Bidwai 2011).

The centre claimed that Mamata was adequately consulted. However, Mamata had objections both to the content of the treaty and the treatment given to her state over an issue that was going to directly impact it. *She even stated that had the Left Front been in power, they would not have been treated in this way.* While officials on both sides were working overtime to iron out the details of a range of agreements, there were not enough efforts at the political level to bring Mamata on board (Chatterjee 2011).

Since Mamata was the coalition partner of Congress, and was also known to have good relations with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, her support was taken for granted. Mamata had been very supportive of other aspects of the India– Bangladesh agreements—including the contentious boundary settlement—which led many to believe that she would go along with the centre on the entire package being worked out for Dhaka. This was in contrast to the Ganga water agreement in 1996, when the Left Front government—and Jyoti Basu personally—were consulted at every stage. The West Bengal government was completely on board and according to India's then high commissioner to Dhaka, 'everything happened only after they were persuaded'.

Politics of Parties on various issues

However, the coalition and regional politics of India stands in the way of smooth disposal of certain issues. *There are certain issues on which the BJP, Congress and state politics have differences of opinion and their vested political interests prevent any consensus.* The other

major areas in which coalition politics of India have impacted on India's relations with Bangladesh.

Politics over Migration Issue in Indo- Bangladesh Relations

The nation built on the principle of rejection of the two-nation theory is confronted with the issue of insiders/outside. Bangladeshis (often a euphemism for Muslims) have been portrayed as a people who keep coming in India wave upon wave, who threaten to swamp us. They are mostly the poorest of the poor who are engaged in menial tasks which locals are unwilling to do. Hindus who are trying to come India from Pakistan are supposedly welcome because they are not Muslims but the economic refugees from Bangladesh who are Muslims have fuelled politics and mayhem in Assam. Rather All India United Democratic Front of Assam (AIUDF) derived its existence to the propaganda of an invasion by migrants from Bangladesh. This has led Muslims to live in fear and to go to anybody who offers the protection and confidence under a Muslim fundamentalist flag.

Bangladeshi migrants have always been an issue for the BJP which it keeps raising periodically at a national level and with greater intensity in sensitive localities where polarisation is perceived to have a favourable impact on electoral outcomes. Illegal immigration from Bangladesh poses a challenge to the internal security of India as witnessed by the violence which took place in Assam in March 2013. Apart from Assam now Bangladeshis have penetrated in Tripura, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. Illegal Bangladeshi immigrants have embarked on grab of the land of indigenous communities at a large scale. The BJP blames and warns that if UPA government will not take this serious issue in cognizance and reins in illegal infiltration then great danger will loom over north east and it will be in flames soon. BJP has blame Congress for looking the other way on Bangladeshi immigration. So as Assam descended into chaos recently, the BJP's national leaders came up with the expected analysis. As reported in The Times of India, January 5, 2013 L.K. Advani said that illegal migrants were at the heart of the problem (Singh 2012). Narendra Modi said they present a security threat to India; his words, in fact, are worth deconstructing: "The infiltration of Bangladeshis is becoming an issue of concern. The Assam violence is just a small example of it but the issue is becoming a major problem for the nation. The people in the country are keen to find a solution to the problem and it is for the PM to spell out a policy. Will the Bangladeshi infiltrators be allowed a sway over the country?" The man expected to

have a major role in the national campaign of the BJP in the 2014 general elections have made it an important foreign policy issue in nation elections and nuanced his position carefully. Bangladeshis were not to be seen as people searching for jobs, land and livelihood in Assam; they were “infiltrators” threatening all of India. BJP leader Arun Jaitley, leader of House said- “The Congress does not have to import illegal immigrants to increase its vote bank. Change in demography has affected the character of a region or state. Demography of sensitive regions should be protected”.

They consider the approach of government on this issue wholly disappointing. The government has treated this as a transient law and order problem. A change in policy and view of Congress is required. It should not import illegal immigrants to increase its vote bank. The price have to be paid by the people of Assam and India. It is not merely a law and order problem or an Assamese problem. It should be seen as a direct and inequitable impact of a structured and conspired demographic invasion of Assam. A hard action is required on this front. Just by bringing army for a few days or by organizing relief camps will not provide solution to the problem. The government should stop illegal immigration, the entire border must be fenced, the detection and deportation must begin forthwith. The population composition in most border districts of Assam has gone a significant change. Out of 27 districts, 11 have majority of persons living who are illegal immigrants (Dasgupta and Deshpande 2012). The pro- India leaders like Sheikh Mujibur Rehman in his book Eastern Pakistan-Its Population Economics asserted “East Pakistan must have land for its expansion and because Assam has abundant forests, mineral resources, coal, petroleum etc. Eastern Pakistan must include Assam to be economically and financially strong”. Encroachment through immigration has been the alternative strategy. India has been silently invaded by millions of immigrants. There was a convergence of the vote bank interests of Congress Party and the neighbourhood. *If and whenever BJP comes to power the issue of illegal migration again assumes a new dimension* (Dasgupta and Deshpande 2012).

But when the ruling Congress comes to power it struck gold large number of assured votes in the form of grateful Bangladeshis. Thus Congress has rather rather tried to maintain status quo as it suited them. It tried to divide Assam by driving a wedge between Bodos and Ahoms- it was the time when demand for a separate “Bodoland” started to emerge. The highly controversial IMDT Act of 1983 was enacted that made it near impossible for a Bangladeshi

migrant to be deported from Assam (Chattopadhyay 2011). Under the Act, the onus of establishing nationality rests not on the illegal migrant, not on the government, but on an individual who had to pay a fee to lodge a complaint to a stipulated jurisdiction. IMDT Act, enacted by the ruling Congress in 1983 that replaced the Foreigner's Act of 1946, was clearly driven by political agenda of vote bank. It took 22 years for the Supreme Court to repeal IMDT Act as un- constitutional in 2005. But 22 years were enough to change the demographic and electoral landscape of the state of Assam (Chattopadhyay 2011). The economic disparity between Bangladesh and India coupled with a government (Congress) friendly to illegal immigrants and a corrupt security force manning borders ensured that large scale immigration continue unabated. This provoked Assam agitation.

Assam agitation culminated in "Assam Accord" signed by the central government and representatives of All Assam Students Union. This was largely an economic package and along with Illegal Migration Determination by Tribunal (IMDT) Act, enacted two years before the accord, virtually regularized illegal migrants from Bangladesh who migrated into India up to March, 1971 and even beyond (Rahim 1998). Peace was brought through a financial package on one hand, and status-quo prevailed in terms of accepting Bangladeshis who migrated before March, 1971 as Indian citizen on the other. The vote bank was saved. The other consequence of Assam agitation and accord was All Assam Students Union (AASU) developing into a full- fledged political party- Assam Gana Parishad (AGP), first credible opposition to Congress in Assam. In the last elections Assam United Democratic Front (AUDF) representing the now substantial Muslim population of Assam overtook AGP to become the second largest party after Congress in state assembly. Predictably Congress is in the same denial mode refusing to accept that illegal Bangladeshi migrants are the source of problem and taking refuge behind Assam Accord which they signed with AASU to legitimize Bangladeshi migrants. They tend to be ably supported by the mainstream national media that has over the years become an appendage of the state. Thus whenever Congress led coalition is in power, it leads to adoption of liberal attitude towards the issue of immigration of Bangladeshis to India and grave dissatisfaction among Assamese. This was one of the factors behind the formation of Assam Gana Parishad, in opposition to Congress policies and the issues take a political tone.

Politics over Hindu atrocities in Bangladesh

BJP has also taken tough positions on recent atrocities on Hindus by Jammāt-e-Islām. As reported in *The Indian Express*, December 19, 2012 according to BJP atrocities are perpetuated on Hindus in Bangladesh whose population has shrunk to only 3 percent of its total population from earlier 28 percent at the time of creation of Bangladesh. Hindus in Bangladesh are subjected to severe atrocities, are being killed, compelled to take refuge in India and abandoned properties of Hindus are seized and are being declared as wasteful property. Over 70,000 BJP activists including women participated in the long march to Dhaka to protest atrocities on religious minorities. Thus this issue is seen through political prism.

Politics over Shahbag Uprising

As said by Ghoshal on March 1, 2013 on ZEE News BJP lauded the recent Shahbag uprising viewing it as a manifestation of secular, democratic forces that considers that all Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Bengalis were Bangladeshis. BJP blames Jammāt-e-Islām. It had sided with Pakistan in 1977 Liberation War and when three of its leaders were hanged, a number of Hindus were killed, their women raped and murdered and atrocities were still continuing in retaliation. BJP is demanding a respond from government on that matter as it considers it as a violation of human rights in Bangladesh. Situation in Bangladesh is explosive at this juncture in Bangladesh. Jammāt- e-Islām backed by ISI, Huji and Pakistan created a situation where Hindus and Buddhists were subjected to atrocities. BJP had tried to give it a Hindutva tone (Anuj 2006).

Politics over River Linking Project

Another important on which BJP and Congress have differences of approach over Indo-Bangladesh relations is the unilateral decision of the then BJP led government of adopting the river linking project which on its implementation would divert water from Ganga and Brahmaputra to West and South India to increase water flow of rivers within those region during the lean period. No doubt Bangladesh would be affected most being the lower riparian country although it would harm to a less extent the lesser developed eastern state of Assam and part of West Bengal and Bihar. The implication of the project has greatly worried Bangladesh. As reported in *The Guardian*, 5 February, 2013 however UPA government have given indications of rethinking of river linking projects while being sensitive to neighbouring countries concerns as well as international implications.

Cross-cutting state interests

When Mamata Banerjee withdrew from the prime minister's delegation, she was presented as someone obstructing the improvement of India–Bangladesh relations. She was seen differently from other chief ministers who accompanied Mr. Manmohan Singh. But it is important to note that it was Mamata Banerjee's state that was to bear the cost of improving India–Bangladesh relations. As reported in *The Telegraph*, 9 May, 2012, her state was supposed to lose 10,000 acres of land and to share water of the Teesta to the detriment of their own interest.

The chief ministers of Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya were the beneficiaries of the improved bilateral relationship. The action against insurgent groups improved the security situation in Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. Even today, Manik Sarkar, chief minister of Tripura, continues to ask Bangladesh to dismantle terrorist camps. Protests have taken place even in Assam over the exchange of territory and the Assam government is also opposed to it. As reported in *The Shillong Times*, 10 May, 2012 parties such as the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) have said that they will oppose the agreement when it is tabled in parliament. Tripura and Bangladesh have a win-win economic relationship. Bangladesh has a trade surplus with Tripura. This economic engagement with Bangladesh helps the improvement of infrastructure in Tripura. The Feni river agreement is also likely to benefit Tripura. Tripura's contribution to the India–Bangladesh relationship is largely symbolic, for instance opening museums and parks or honouring Sheikh Hasina with an honorary degree. But West Bengal was to suffer materially by losing territory and water.

Politics over India- Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement

Protocols for the 1973 Land Boundary Agreement involving exchange of lands in 111 Indian enclaves and 51 Bangladeshi enclaves require a constitution amendment for ratification. The protocol to the 1974 India- Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement was inked during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's recent visit to Bangladesh in September 2011. As reported in *Times of India*, 29 June, 2013 119th Amendment Bill to the Constitution would operationalise this agreement and completely demarcate the 4,100 km India- Bangladesh land border. BJP has created hurdle in the passage of 2011 India- Bangladesh Boundary Agreement. It considers it flawed and one sided and is not ready to bank its support on it. The argument forwarded is that under the process of exchanging enclaves Bangladesh will have to give

3,000 acres only while India has to forego 13,000. The government is not able to clear that how it will compensate for the loss of 10,000 acres of land. India will have to give 10,000 acres extra land from West Bengal and 5,000 acres land from Assam to Bangladesh. India's return will be minimal. It has rejected it on grounds that only because of a pact between Indira Gandhi and Mujibur Rehman and now between Manmohan Singh and Sheikh Hasina, the land swap deal cannot be supported. The BJP will oppose the proposed agreement between the two neighbours because party thinks that the Congress led UPA government is agreeing to that which is more advantageous to Bangladesh. Secondly, Land Boundary Agreement does not address the issue of illegal migration from Bangladesh. Thirdly, it considers that the basic framework of the Indian Constitution does not allow the government to cede any portion of India (Ghosh 2013).

But BJP has created hurdles in the passage of the bill. In such a situation the Bhartiya Janata Party's opposition to Land Boundary Agreement is not only a violation of human rights of the enclave dwellers but also holds to ransom positive Indo- Bangladesh ties. Thus apart from Teesta river water treaty, the approval and ratification of Land Boundary has emerges as a key bilateral issue in Indo- Bangladesh relations. With the pro- India Awami League government in Dhaka was trying to go extra mile to address India's security concerns such as taking strict action against northeast insurgents and anti- India elements which are operating from Bangladesh soil- it was expected of India to hold its end of the relationship. If the BJP would have reconsidered its position on Land Boundary Agreement, then the ratification of LBA and measures such as lines of credit and trade concessions which New Delhi has already provided would boost India- Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh has already ratified the pact and has been repeatedly reminding India to do the same. The Indian government has been maintaining that it is trying to create political consensus. The government needs to take the opposition, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), into confidence to ensure the amendment is passed by two-thirds of members 'present and voting'. While Mamata Banerjee had initially given her consent for the pact, she is later said to have again expressed reservations, putting the government on the back foot. In Bangladesh, there is complete unanimity over this issue as it stands to gain territory (Ghosh 2013).

Conclusion

Having analyzed the relations between India and Bangladesh since 1996 during coalition phase under United Front, NDA and UPA government, it is clearly evident that the relations have been affected by the nature of coalition politics of the time. Various issues had become hostages to the politics of state parties, regional interests and vote bank politics of national parties. There are several areas in which coalition politics impacted on India- Bangladesh relations. In coalition setup where different political parties have varying interests, views and beliefs, it is difficult to have a consensus on issues where differences persist. But nevertheless India had successful coalitions and dealt with neighbors in a cautious manner.

Beginning from 1996, it was coalition government of that time that is United Front government with I.K.Gujral as Foreign Minister that showed keen interest in developing friendly and non- reciprocal relations with neighbours. Gujral's Doctrine led to some landmark in Indo- Bangladesh relations. The signing of Ganges Water Agreement and Chittagong Accord were due to the sincere efforts of the regime. It was their understanding of coalition government and its limitation that made possible these. Rather coalition politics became a factor in reaching an agreement over Ganges and Chittagong. For example in 1996 Sheikh Hasina government took a calculated and balanced initiative in reaching an agreement over Ganges and Chittagong. She displayed some understanding of Indian political scene as well as an appreciation of the sincerity and willingness of I.K. Gujral's desire to promote friendship with Bangladesh. She deduced that the prevailing coalition government of Deve Gowda in Delhi was living on borrowed time and could be toppled at any moment. No prospective government, which may subsequently be elected to office, would have a person as sympathetic to Bangladesh as Gujral. She then decided that in the short time Gujral may remain a key decision-maker in Delhi, it was important for Bangladesh to negotiate the best possible deal likely to be offered by India to Bangladesh on these two outstanding issues. History has proved Hasina right in investing in the political wisdom and friendship of I.K Gujral towards Bangladesh.

I.K.Gujral himself took note of the fact that Government of West Bengal then ruled by the CPM, with Jyoti Basu as Chief Minister, needed to be taken on board, since West Bengal was likely to be directly affected by any agreement regarding their share of the Ganges waters.

The West Bengal government had virtual veto powers over the agreement as it is the state that is directly affected. Since the CPM Government was not an active partner in the Janata Dal coalition government, Gujral deduced that there were political compulsions and sensitivities involved in persuading them to become party to such an agreement. He accordingly suggested Awami League Government to open its own channel of communications with government of Jyoti Basu, drawing on our shared cultural heritage and geography, to encourage them to participate in the realisation of this historic settlement. Given the politically propitious opportunities which had just emerged, Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, was encouraged to involve himself in playing a role to help in realization of this settlement with Bangladesh and for that he had Gujral's blessings to do so. In an act of exceptional statesmanship and courage for a regime which had just assumed office after spending 21 years in the Opposition, Sheikh Hasina invested her accumulated political capital in reaching an early settlement over the sharing of the Ganges waters. Jyoti Basu showed similar statesmanship. He delegated this responsibility to Asim Dasgupta (who, though as Finance Minister, had little exposure to water issues but enjoyed the full confidence of his Chief Minister) to directly participate in the negotiations on this issue with Bangladesh. Gujral's own statesmanship was then demonstrated by building a consensus for such agreement, with the principal Opposition parties in the Lok Sabha, led by the BJP. With similar political foresight and vision he formally invited the Government of West Bengal to be a party to the negotiations and permitted Asim Dasgupta to lead the Indian team in the negotiations with Alamgir and his colleagues.

Thus it is a rare instance in Indian history whereby a state government which was not even a coalition partner at the centre was made party and an important actor in international negotiations which traditionally remains in the domain of the central government. This statesmanship and political vision and foresight of Gujral and Jyoti Basu may be compared and contrasted with the uncooperative attitude and conduct and denial mode of Miss Mamta Banerjee, the current Chief Minister of West Bengal and also to the political incapacity and failure of prevalent Congress government to engage Mamta Banerjee in the dialogue process which has thrown water over the realization of an agreement over the sharing of Teesta water. This wisdom, statesmanship and vision of Sheikh Hasina and I.K.Gujral culminated in the signing of the Ganges Water Treaty in 1996 on the occasion of the state visit by Deve Gowda

even though it involved criticism from the opposition parties. The dispute between India and Bangladesh was resolved by the historic treaty signed by the Indian Prime Minister H.D.Deve Gowda and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina on 12 December, 1996. West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu of Communist Party of India (Marxist) played a key role in the negotiations and was present with Foreign Minister I.K.Gujral. It was due to his support and non-objectionable attitude that the treaty could get through. The treaty is based on the principles of equity and fairplay, taking into account the interests of both countries. It provided a just and reasonable sharing of the burden of shortage.

Gujral's move to solve outstanding problems with Bangladesh extended beyond the Ganges to find a long due settlement to the crisis of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where over the past 15 years insurgents from Chakma community were being sheltered across the borders by India. Hasina once again took stock of the situation and found a willing partner in Gujral. Thus the agreement between the Sheikh Hasina government and Chakmas was made possible due to Gujral's intervention and eventually some pressure on the insurgents by which they consented to lay down their arms and returned to Bangladesh.

Thus the United Front Government in India could assure better relations with her immediate neighbours. The water agreement improved the bilateral relations dramatically. The last agreement on water sharing lapsed in 1988. What a treaty has tried to achieve psychologically is an end to the era of blaming the neighbour for everything that is wrong. It opens anew chapter in South Asian Cooperation and also the realization by the neighbours that they will only gain by cooperation. Though most parties seemed happy about the outcome of the week- long negotiations, the Bhartiya Janata Party raised objections. The then BJP President L.K.Advani, termed it as detrimental to the interests of the riparian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu dispelled fears that the agreement will be detrimental to the state's interests in the long run.

Though the chief minister of the Left- Front government in West Bengal Jyoti Basu played a leading role in forging consensus between the two national governments over the sharing of Ganges Water in 1997, there was no cooperation between the two to arrest the flood of illegal immigration coming into state. Jyoti Basu was stirred to action on migration issue only due to threat to his majority at the polls. The main raider of the Hindu vote banks of the West Bengal was the BJP. Jyoti Basu immediately drove to action and delivered a blunt message to Sheikh

Hasina that remaining goodwill for Bangladesh was fast evaporating in India, and she had to take steps to check the tide of infiltrators. This issue demonstrates how internal issues in Indian state politics made its impact on bilateral relations with Bangladesh. Although this issue in West Bengal was a local one in which with the local branch of the BJP making the running, it had implications in the national and international sphere as well.

After the United Front Government period, the coalition government of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by BJP came to power. The new regime inherited a tension free Indo-Bangladesh relation except minor differences on some bilateral issues. Sheikh Hasina , the ruling Prime Minister of that time after having excellent rapport with Prime Ministers H.D.Deve Gowda and I.K.Gujral after the coming of the B.J.P. government could establish a personal equation between the two, it was a welcome development. She was the first foreign dignitary to visit India after India exploded its nuclear device on May 11 and 13. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh in course of her talks with the Indian counterpart appreciated India's security concerns and the rationale behind the nuclear tests. It was significant for the fact that she is representing a Muslim majority neighbour and is fighting a bitter battle in her own land against the fundamentalist forces that are essentially anti India. Despite the tremendous political pressure after the Pokhran blasts came out against India on the nuclear issue, she restrained herself and accepted the sovereign right of India to take appropriate measures based on its own security perceptions.

The relations were on a positive note at that time because Sheikh Hasina also showed goodwill gesture *but with coming of Begum Khaleda Zia representing fundamentalist ideology, relations with BJP with its Hindutva ideology got strained.* . Ever since the BNP government came to power in 2001, Indian commentators, especially those from West Bengal, have shackled that government with radical Islam, anti- India sentiments and actions, anti-secularism, anti-democracy and pro-China policies. This development in the society and politics of Bangladesh over shadowed the relations, political in particular between the two friendly neighbours BJP also kept raising the issue of illegal migration from Bangladesh to India which was posing a serious threat to the security of India and which has been neglected by Congress due to its Muslim vote bank politics. Bangladeshi migrants have always been an issue for the BJP which it keeps raising periodically at a national level and with greater intensity in sensitive localities where polarisation is perceived to have a favourable impact on

electoral outcomes. On this issue only in November 2002 Bangladesh- India relations turned to frozen. Actually it happened due to a much publicized statement made by Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister of India L.K. Advani about the increase in the activities of ISI and Al- Qaeda after the change of government in Bangladesh. The Indian government claimed that there were some hundreds of training camps located in Bangladesh where the anti- India miscreants and insurgents got trained to operate against India. In spite of these controversies, Dhaka- Kolkata and Dhaka- Agartala bus services were the positive achievements in India- Bangladesh relations during Atal Bihari Vajpayee regime in India. But the breakthrough in the relations came when Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina came to power in 2009. In India United Progressive Alliance led by Congress came to power. *Indian National Congress and Awami League represent secular, socialist and populist principles whereas BJP and Awami League were based historically on conservative and to some extent elitist interests which tap into religious affiliations. Thus the periods of greater friendship, trust, cooperation and good relations between Bangladesh and India were witnessed when Indian National Congress rules India and Awami League controls Bangladesh.* As an outfit of Hasina's emergence as a secular representative and pro- Indian leader, she gave New Delhi a major priority in her foreign policy domain. Hasina visited India in January 2010. Hasina's visit was a remarkable success in the regional development. Three major initiatives were undertaken by India. First, there was the US\$ 1 billion credit line to Bangladesh for infrastructure development, the largest single financial aid package to any recipient from India. Second, amidst the raft of five agreement signed, one on cooperation in the power sector was also included. According to it, India was committed to provide 250 MW of power to Bangladesh every day and third was to reduce the negative list of items imported from Bangladesh and accord it 'zero tariff' treatment. There were substantial paybacks for India as well. India obtained access to two Bangladeshi ports, Chittagong and Mongla. This opened up the landlocked Indian northeastern states to the Bay of Bengal. A project to link the Indian state of Tripura to Bangladesh was agreed upon. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Bangladesh in September, 2011 which has been a mixed blessing at present and it may mark a new dawn in the history of Indo- Bangladesh relations, and break fresh grounds in bilateral ties in future. Dr. Singh's visit was historic as one of the agreements signed by the Prime Minister of both countries will do away with a particular baggage of partition- the

Radcliffe award that led to the division of Bengal. The enclave and adverse possession issues couldn't be resolved so far because of the arbitrariness of the award.. The Manmohan Singh-Hasina entente finally dealt with this post- partition hangover. The Protocol to the Agreement Concerning the Demarcation between India and Bangladesh and Related Matters was signed which seeks to address all the outstanding land boundary issues and provide a final settlement to the India- Bangladesh boundary.

Resolutions for certain issues have still not been found and occasionally these have brought temporary clouds in the clear sky of Indo- Bangladesh's evolving relations. There are three such thorny issues, namely the water- sharing of Teesta river; transit facilities through the territories of India and Bangladesh for facilitating trade relations and discord on the Tipaimukh dam and their concomitant implications on the corpus of mutual ties. Here, the coalition politics of India as contrast to 1996 Ganges Water Treaty stood in way of reaching agreement on Teesta. The pulls and pressures of coalition politics affected Indo- Bangladesh relations in a way that perhaps Mamata's prickly relationship with the Congress also prompted her to adopt a recalcitrant attitude. This weakness of India's policy making and the major constitutional problems with reference to Centre- State relations in a federal structure placed the Indian Prime Minister in an awkward position in the mindset of the Bangladesh government. Consequently Manmohan Singh had to concede to Miss Banerjee's dissenting voice, at the cost of damaging a protracted attempt to elevate relations with Bangladesh to a new high. This event made it threadbare that in spite of the fact that the Constitution of India puts foreign policy under the purview of the Union List, the leader of the Central (UPA) government could hardly afford to alienate the Trinamool Congress Party (led by Mamata Banerjee), since it is the second- largest constituent of the UPA, holding almost 26 parliamentary seats. Thus the success of the Teesta water- sharing agreement is inextricably linked to the overland transit agreement between India and Bangladesh. In an immediate reaction to the non- signing of the Teesta deal, Bangladesh announced that the overland transit agreement as well as its earlier decision to allow access to two Bangladeshi ports- Mongla and Chittagong – for movement of goods to and fro from India through road and rail, would be signed, provided the Teesta deal was signed in the first place.

In our federal scheme of things, nothing is done or will be done without consultations with the state government. Any agreement to conclude will have to be accepted by the state

governments and Bangladesh. No agreement will be done without the consultation of the state governments. However, the Chief Minister of West Bengal- a major stakeholder in the Teesta issue- Mamta Banerjee protested against the final draft of the Teesta River Water Sharing Agreement, since she argued that the final draft was prepared without her knowledge where the sharing of water interest on part of West Bengal was overlooked.

A detailed appraisal of factors impacting Indo- Bangladesh relations indicates the need to shed the stereotyped assumption about political realities. The assumption that BNP is anti-India and Awami League is pro- India. It is an inward looking approach to international relations. The reality is that both of them propound neither pro- India nor anti- India machinations. The attitude of both India and Bangladesh is governed by domestic political compulsions and tactics to secure a modicum of regime security.

Thus after detailed analysis of India- Bangladesh relations since 1996, my proposition that coalition politics of India impacted on Indo- Bangladesh relations stands true. The politics of national parties, state parties, vote bank politics and regional aspirations in India, all have determined the fate of bilateral relations between the two. For instance, Ganges water treaty of 1996 was made possible because of the support of Jyoti Basu of Left, Chief Minister of West Bengal, the key negotiator of the treaty. At that time Communist Party of India (M) was a partner of coalition government at the centre and Jyoti Basu perceived sharing of Ganges water treaty in the state's interest and he was also fully taken on board by the Centre. This time coalition government was instrumental in reaching an agreement over this and some other vital issues whereas during Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka in 2011, the failure of UPA II to take into confidence Mamta Banerjee, CM of West Bengal over Teesta river sharing led to a thaw in relations. This time also Mamta Banerjee's Trinamool Congress was a partner of coalition but due to Mamta's denial mode UPA's survival was at stake since government could hardly afford to alienate the Trinamool Congress Party (led by Mamta Banerjee) since it is the second largest constituent of the UPA, holding almost 26 parliamentary seats . Here coalition politics became a limitation to push through the deal. However in other areas where regional politics was not dominating the scene, no major hindrances came in the way of central government to pursue national interest. Similarly when coalition led by BJP comes to power, the issue of illegal migration from Bangladesh becomes

the main issue in India-Bangladesh relations since BJP feels that Congress encourages Bangladeshi migration to strengthen its Muslim vote bank.

Another instance to prove the point is that though the chief minister of the Left- Front government in West Bengal Jyoti Basu played a leading role in forging consensus between the two national governments over the sharing of Ganges Water in 1997, there was no cooperation between the two to arrest the flood of illegal immigration coming into state. Jyoti Basu was stirred to action on migration issue only due to threat to his majority at the polls. The main raider of the Hindu vote banks of the West Bengal was the BJP. Jyoti Basu immediately drove to action and delivered a blunt message to Sheikh Hasina that remaining goodwill for Bangladesh was fast evaporating in India, and she had to take steps to check the tide of infiltrators. *This issue demonstrates how internal issues in Indian state politics made its impact on bilateral relations with Bangladesh.* Although this issue in West Bengal was a local one in which with the local branch of the BJP making the running, it had implications in the national and international sphere as well.

Issues and Problems in India-Bangladesh Relations - Alternative Policy Paradigm

The analysis of factors shaping the dynamics of India- Bangladesh relations suggest that the two countries are yet to overcome the ideological and strategic parameters left over by history and consolidated during the Cold War. *Besides the opportunistic politics of parties, coalition compulsions, vote bank, political mileage decide the fate of several issues. Short periods of close relationship amidst long periods of hostile attitude have characterized the relationship between the two countries. However, the domestic politics and issues and the stereotyped assumptions should not stand in the way of smooth relations between the two. It is in both countries interest to pursue relations of trust and confidence. The compulsions of globalization and the present friendly regime provide ample opportunity to strengthen the strategic and development partnership between the two countries to the extent that it survives the political and ideological hangover of the past. India, as an emerging global power and a responsible stakeholder in the peace, stability and progress of South Asia, has initiated fresh moves in the region. Among other things, the Gujral Doctrine of 1997 postulates a proactive role for India in developing close relations with her neighbours, without adhering to the principle of reciprocity in bilateral relations. The new Neighbourhood Policy of India, articulated in 2005, pleads for developing connectivity and people- to- people contacts with*

her neighbours. India's economic diplomacy in South Asia is geared in that direction. In this broad framework, India needs the development partnership with Bangladesh to succeed. Moving beyond that, India's economic diplomacy in Bangladesh should also address the challenges of consolidating secular democracy, peace and human resource development. India has to emerge as a leading stakeholder in the development process of Bangladesh. India must realize that the traditional corners of security threats are no more valid in the present context of globalization and her emerging role as a global power. South Asia needs India's long and historic innings for its integration and development. In order to change the negative domestic perception, public diplomacy and people-to-people contacts should be harnessed to the best effect. The peoples of India and Bangladesh share strong cultural and social ties which provide ample scope for the success of India's public diplomacy. Sooner or later, the logic of mutually beneficial economic partnership will overcome the ideological and political hurdles between the two countries.

APPENDIX A

Treaty between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Sharing of The Ganges Waters: (1996)

Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

DETERMINED to promote and strengthen their relations of friendship and good neighbourliness,

INSPIRED by the common desire of promoting the well being of their people's. Being desirous of sharing by mutual agreement the water of the international rivers flowing through the territories of the two countries and of making the optimum utilisation of the water resources of their region in the fields of flood management, irrigation, river basin development and generation of hydro-power for the mutual benefit of the peoples of the two countries,

RECOGNISING that the need for making an arrangement for the sharing of the Ganges water at Farakka in a spirit of mutual accommodation and the need for a solution to the long-term problem of augmenting the flows of the Ganges are in the mutual interests of the peoples of the two countries,

BEING desirous of finding a fair and just solution without affecting the rights and entitlements of either country other than those covered by this Treaty or establishing any general principles of law or precedent. Have Agreed as Follows

Article 1

The quantum of waters agreed to be released by India to Bangladesh will be at Farakka.

Article 2

(i) *The sharing between India and Bangladesh of the Ganges water at Farakka by ten day periods from the January 1 to the May 31 every year will be with reference to the formula at annexure- 1 and an indicative schedule giving the implication of the sharing arrangement under Annexure-I is at Annexure- II.*

(ii) The indicative schedule at Annexure II, as referred to in sub para (i) above, is based on 40 years (1949-1988) 10 day period average availability of water at Farakka as in the 40-years average availability as mentioned above.

(i) In the event flow at Farakka falls below 50,000 cusecs in any 10- day period, the two governments will enter into immediate consultations to make adjustments on an emergency basis in accordance with the principles of equity, fair play and no harm to either party.

Article 3

The water released to Bangladesh at Farakka under Article 1 shall not be reduced below Farakka except for reasonable uses of waters, not exceeding 200 cusecs, by India between Farakka and the point on the Ganges where both its banks are in Bangladesh.

Article 4

A Committee consisting of representatives nominated by the two Governments in equal number (hereinafter called the Joint Committee) shall be constituted following the signing of this Treaty. The Joint Committee shall set up suitable teams at Farakka and Hardinge Bridge to observe and record at Farakka the daily flow below Farakka Barrage, in the Feeder Canal, and at the Navigation Lock, as well as at the Hardinge Bridge.

Article 5

The Joint Committee shall decide its on procedure and method of functioning.

Article 6

The Joint Committee shall submit to the two Governments all data collected by it and shall also submit a yearly report to both the Governments. Following submission of the reports the two governments will meet at appropriate levels to decide upon such further actions as may be needed.

Article 7

The Joint Committee shall be responsible for implementing the arrangements contained in this Treaty and examining, any difficulty arising out of the implementation of the above arrangements and of the operation of Farakka Barge. Any difference or dispute arising in this regard, if not resolved by the Joint Committee, it shall be referred to the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission. If the difference or the dispute still remains unresolved, it shall be referred to the two Governments which shall meet urgently at the appropriate level to resolve it by mutual discussion.

Article 8

The two Governments recognize the need to cooperate with each other in finding a solution to the long-term problem of augmenting the flow of the Ganges during the dry season.

Article 9

Guided by the principles of equity, fairness and no harm to either party, both the Governments agree to conclude water sharing Treaties/Agreements with regard to other common rivers.

Article 10

The sharing arrangements under this Treaty shall be reviewed by the two governments at five year interval or earlier, as required by either party and needed adjustments, based on principles of equity, fairness and no ham to either party made thereto, if necessary. It would be open to either party to seek the first review after two year to assess the impact and working of the sharing arrangements as contained in this Treaty.

Article 11

For the period of this Treaty, in the absence of mutual agreement on adjustments following reviews as mentioned in Article X, India shall release downstream of Farakka Barrage, water at a rate not less than 90 per cent of Bangladesh's share according to the formula referred to in Article 11, until such time as mutually agreed flows are decided upon.

Article 12

This Treaty shall enter into force upon signatures and shall remain in force for a period of thirty years and it shall be renewable on the basis of mutual consent.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned (H.D.Deve Gowda, PM, Republic of India and Sheikh Hasina, PM, People's Republic of Bangladesh) being duly authorised thereto by the respective Governments have signed this Treaty.

DONE at New Delhi 12th December, 1996 in Hindi, Bangla and English languages. In the event of any conflict between the texts, the English shall prevail.

Source - URL: http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/1316/13/13_appendix.pdf

APPENDIX B

FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA AND GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

The Government of the Republic of India (hereinafter Government of India) and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (hereinafter Government of Bangladesh)

RECALLING the two countries' shared bonds of history, culture and common values;

DESIRIOUS of living in peace and harmony with each other and fostering good neighbourly relations based on sovereign equality, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, and mutual respect and mutual benefit;

INSPIRED by an abiding faith in and total commitment to democracy, development, pluralism and peaceful co-existence;

REITERATING their common objective of eradicating poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease and promoting social justice and inclusive growth with a view to enabling their peoples to realize their potential to the full;

DESIROUS of promoting trans-border cooperation in the management of shared water resources, hydropower potentials and eco-systems and in the areas of connectivity and trade and economic cooperation;

CONVINCED that cooperation at the bilateral, sub-regional and regional levels will accelerate development and enable the two countries to realise their developmental aspirations, shared destiny and common vision of a peaceful and prosperous South Asia;

HAVE AGREED as under:

ARTICLE 1

To promote trade, investment and economic cooperation, which is balanced, sustainable and builds prosperity in both countries. Both Parties shall take steps to narrow trade imbalances, remove progressively tariff and non-tariff barriers and facilitate trade, by road, rail, inland waterways, air and shipping. Both Parties will encourage the development of appropriate

infrastructure, use of sea ports, multimodal transportation and standardization of means of transport for bilateral as well as sub-regional use.

ARTICLE 2

To enhance cooperation in sharing of the waters of common rivers, both Parties will explore the possibilities of common basin management of common rivers for mutual benefit. The Parties will cooperate in flood forecasting and control. They will cooperate and provide necessary assistance to each other to enhance navigability and accessibility of river routes and ports.

ARTICLE 3

To develop mechanisms for technical cooperation and exchange of advance information with respect to natural disasters. The Parties shall also promote training and capacity building initiatives and cooperation between respective disaster management authorities, with a view to upgrading response mechanism.

ARTICLE 4

To establish arrangements for cooperation in generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity, including electricity from renewable or other sources. The Parties also agree to use power grid connectivity to promote power exchanges to mutual economic advantage.

ARTICLE 5

To promote scientific, educational, cultural and people to people exchanges and cooperation between the two countries. These shall be implemented through programmes and joint initiatives in areas such as agriculture, education and culture, health, tourism, sports, science & technology and any other area that the Parties may agree. The Parties shall cooperate by means of exchange of data, scientific knowledge, collaborative research, training, common programmes and in any other manner as may be agreed between the two Parties.

ARTICLE 6

To develop and implement programmes for environmental protection and responding to the challenges of climate change through adaptation. The Parties shall collaborate on projects of mutual interest to preserve common eco-systems and, as far as practicable, coordinate their response in international fora.

ARTICLE 7

To harness the advantages of sub-regional cooperation in the power sector, water resources management, physical connectivity, environment and sustainable development for mutual advantage, including jointly developing and financing projects.

ARTICLE 8

To cooperate closely on issues relating to their national interests. Both parties shall work together to create a peaceful environment conducive for inclusive economic growth and development.

ARTICLE 9

To cooperate on security issues of concern to each other while fully respecting each other's sovereignty. Neither party shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the other.

ARTICLE 10

To establish a Joint Consultative Commission for effective and smooth implementation of this Agreement that shall meet once a year.

ARTICLE 11

The Agreement may be amended by mutual consent in order to enhance, deepen and widen the scope of cooperation, including regional / sub-regional expansion.

ARTICLE 12

This Agreement shall come into force on the date of its signing by the two Parties and shall remain in force until terminated by mutual consent in accordance with Para 2 of this Article.

Either Party may seek termination of this Agreement by giving a written notice to the other Party providing the reasons for seeking such termination. Before this Agreement is terminated, the Parties shall consider the relevant circumstances and hold consultations to address the reasons cited by the Party seeking termination in the Joint Consultative Commission. Actions taken or agreements reached pursuant to this Agreement shall not be affected by its expiry or termination. Done in Dhaka on the Sixth day of September, 2011, in two originals in English Language and signed by Dr. Manmohan Singh, PM. India and Sheikh Hasina, PM, Bangladesh

Source: Website of Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, September 6, 2011, <http://mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/5218/Framework+Agreement+on+Cooperation+for+Development+between+India+and+Bangladesh>

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