



## **Pondicherry University**

Pondicherry, now Puducherry, is a Union Territory with one of the highest levels of quality of life in the country with excellent physical infrastructure and almost a hundred per cent literacy level. The Pondicherry University was established at this beautiful town in 1985 by the Government of India through an Act of Parliament. The University is located in the serene surroundings on Coromandal coast and 10 km north of Puducherry. The campus is spread over 780 acres of land some of which is rolling down to the sea beach. The University is a member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities and has signed Memorandum of Understanding with several foreign universities / institutes. A recent survey reported by the UGC (University Grants Commission) and the NAAC (National Accreditation and Assessment Council) ranked this university as one of the best in the country.

## **UGC Centre for Southern Asia Studies**

The UGC sanctioned this programme to the University during the 10<sup>th</sup> plan in June 2005. The chief objective of this programme is to promote policy-oriented as well as theoretical research and publication in the field of Southern Asia Studies. The programme is also intended to promote cultural understanding in the region and build up library on the subject. The area of teaching and research of this Center is wider than that of South Asian Studies and UMISARC, as the Southern Asian region covers not only SAARC counties, but also a part of West, East and South-East Asia. To be more precise, this region covers the area between the Gulf of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca.

## **The Seminar Theme**

Ever since assuming the charge of the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi initiated transformative actions in both the fields of domestic and foreign policy. One of such initiatives in the area of foreign policy, which attracted huge domestic and global attention, is his Government's new initiatives towards India's Neighbourhood. By inviting the heads of the Governments of the South Asian countries for the swearing-in ceremony, Narendra Modi clearly indicated that improving relations with its neighbours would be a major foreign policy priority of his Government.

This proved to be true when Prime Minister Modi made his first foreign visit to Bhutan. The visit was viewed as a significant move to overhaul India's neighbourhood policy, which was in complete disarray over last some years. Both India and Bhutan reiterated their commitments to achieve the 10,000 MW target in hydropower cooperation and not to allow their territories to be used for interests inimical to each other. In the case of Nepal, the visits of Modi and Sushma Swaraj radically altered the atmospherics by making political level discourse between the two countries both pleasant and hopeful. Modi was the first Indian Prime Minister visiting Nepal in the past 17 years, who addressed the question of the trust deficit with Nepal at the political as well as public levels in that country. As regards Bangladesh, even though the BJP had opposed the UPA II Government's move to conclude Land Boundary Agreement with Dhaka, soon after the formation of the Government, the Modi team realised the significance of friendly ties with Bangladesh in general and the benefits of the land boundary agreement in particular and hence decided to amend the Indian Constitution for implementing this agreement. In Sri Lanka, the Government soon grasped the dilemma of balancing domestic Tamil sentiments with friendly ties with Sri Lanka and did not succumb to the pressure of not inviting Sri Lankan President for the oath taking ceremony. The new Government in Colombo has warmly

reciprocated New Delhi's friendly ties, which have been further cemented by PM Modi's recent visits to Sri Lanka, Seychelles, and Mauritius. In Afghanistan, the Government is continuing with India's developmental assistance with Kabul and making efforts to deal with the fallouts of the American drawdown from Afghanistan. Modi's visit to Myanmar too was intended to develop better ties with that country.

While it is too early to make an assessment of achievements of Modi Government towards improving ties with India's neighbours with a view to promote enlightened national interests, emerging trends indicate that except countries such as Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka Maldives and the Government has not been able to achieve its goal of developing very cordial ties with its neighbours. Pakistan is, of course, a special case which has always defied any Indian attempt to break the ice in the relationship with Islamabad, making constructive engagement with Pakistan as the biggest challenge before the Modi government without compromising on its present stand.

It is thus clear that traditional constraints of South Asian geography, history, society, politics and role of external powers are conditioning the Government's positive moves towards its neighbours. Deep layers of suspicion and distrust cultivated through long years of the monarchy's dominance and subsequent democratic dithering in Nepal, for instance, are limiting Nepalese goodwill towards India. Nepal nationalism has been fed liberally on an anti-India diet for all these years. Politically, all the parties in Nepal are deeply divided internally owing to personality clashes and power struggles. In all these fault lines India is a major contentious issue.

What is however new is that Prime Minister Modi has demonstrated his ability to shift from liberal to realist approach to respond to changing needs and circumstances in this regards. While dealing with Pakistan, for example, Modi extended olive branch to that country by inviting Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for oath taking ceremony and resuming the dialogue. But India showed the red signal when Pakistani Foreign Secretary tried to meet separatist Hurriyat leaders before talks with Indian officials. It also responded to firing of bullets from the Pakistani side by firing mortars from the Indian side.

Similarly, in the case of China, he clearly told the visiting Chinese President to stop incursion of the Chinese troops into Indian territory even while welcoming him in Ahmadabad. The Government has started modernising defence preparedness such as building infrastructure on the India-China border and developing cordial ties with major powers and South East Asian Countries who have apprehensions about China. Yet, at the same time, the Modi Government is deepening economic linkages with China for India's economic advancement. Besides, taking lessons from his experience as a Chief Minister, PM Modi is recognizing the role of states in promoting India's economic development.

The above outline of the Modi Government's neighbourhood initiatives raises several questions. To cite only a few: what are structural constraints that restrain India's good neighbourhood policy? What are the elements of continuity and changes in India's dealing with her neighbours during the present Government? How far and to what extent the Government is moving towards serving India's national interests? What is the role of personality and structure of decision making in formulating Modi Government's policy towards Neighbours? What are the areas where and how the Government can do better? What policy recommendations can be made for improving India's ties with neighbours with a view to promoting national interests and larger causes of peace, security and development? How a better coordination can be achieved between the Union and States in dealing with foreign policy issues affecting particular country.

The UGC Centre for Southern Asia Studies of Pondicherry Central University, therefore, proposes to bring together top most academics, diplomats, policy analysts and defence personnels for deliberating upon the above-mentioned and related issues. Paper may be submitted on the following and related sub-themes:

### Conceptual Themes

1. India's Neighbourhood Policy: Determinants and Structural Constraints
2. Role of Personality and the Structure of Decision-Making in Formulation of Foreign Policy: A Case of Modi Government's Policy towards Neighbours
3. India's Policy towards the Neighbours: An overview
4. Modi Government's Policy towards Neighbours: Continuity and Changes
5. Pursuing National Interests through Neighbourhood Diplomacy: The Case of Modi Government's Policy towards Neighbours
6. Promoting Soft Power
7. Promoting Provincial Role in Foreign Economic Policy

### Bilateral Themes

8. Dealing with Pakistan: From Liberal to Realist Approach
9. China: Pursuit of Competition and Cooperation
10. Dealing with Post-NATO Afghanistan
11. Ties with Maldives: A New Horizon of Hopes
12. Sri Lanka: Balancing Special and National interests
13. Bangladesh: Reviving Bounds of Friendship
14. Nepal: Bridging the Trust Deficit
15. Bhutan: Maintaining and Deepening Time-Tested Ties
16. Myanmar: Giving Priority to Strategic and Economic Interests

The above-mentioned topics are only tentative. Paper writers may opt other topics relevant to the seminar theme.

### Paper Submission

Participants willing to present paper are requested to follow the schedule and guidelines given below:

- Abstract (not exceeding 250 words) should be submitted on or before **March 31, 2015**.
- Abstract should include the name of the author(s), their affiliation and address (postal and e-mail)
- One complete paper (soft copy) not exceeding 20 pages should be sent through email on [ugcsasp.pu@gmail.com](mailto:ugcsasp.pu@gmail.com), on or before **April 15, 2015**.
- Paper must not be previously published or currently under review for publication elsewhere.
- The following style sheet may kindly be used.

The selected paper writers would be given AC III class train fare and shared accommodation subject to availability.

## Style Sheet

1. The paper may be composed in MS-Words format, Times New Roman font with heading in Font Size 14 and the remaining text in the font size 12 with 1.5 spacing.
2. Notes should be numbered consecutively, superscripted in the text and attached to the end of the article.
3. Spelling should follow the British pattern: e.g. 'colour', NOT 'color'.
4. Quotations should be placed in double quotation marks. Long quotes of above 4 (four) lines should be indented in single space.
5. Use italics for title of the books, newspaper, journals and magazines in text and end notes.
6. In the text, number below 100 should be mentioned in words (e.g. twenty eight). Use "per cent", but in tables the symbol % should be typed.

## Citing References

### Book

Leo E. Rose and Richard Sission, *War and Succession: India, Pakistan and Creation of Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1990), pp. 102-5.

### Citing an article from an edited book

A. Appadorai, "On Understanding Indian Foreign Policy," in K. P. Misra, ed., *Studies in Indian Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Thompson Press, 1969), pp. 113-17.

### Citing an Article from a journal

Nalni Kant Jha, "Implications for India of an Unstable Nepal," *Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies* (Kathmandu), vol.6, no.1, March, 2006, p.36.

### Citing an article from a Newspaper

Shekhar Gupta, "Pakistan's Civilian Deal," *Indian Express* (New Delhi), August 30, 2008.

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