



India-Japan relations since 2000:

A normative perspective

Relacje indyjsko-japońskie od 2000 roku: Perspektywa normatywna

Nihar K. Kulkarni

ORCID: 0000-0002-2582-0465

e-mail: n.kulkarni@uw.edu.pl

Uniwersytet Warszawski

Szkoła Doktorska Nauk Społecznych

This article explains the role of norms in IR with respect to particular focus on the bilateral security relationship between India and Japan since 2000. The article deals with the following questions, which are the normative driving factors between India and Japan to come together and cooperate? And how are those norms playing a major role in bringing them together? The article also analyzes the three liberal assumptions made by Andrew Moravcsik with Indo-Japan. And at the conclusion, it asserts that norms have been playing a major role between Indo-Japan relations since 2000.

Keywords: IR, Indo-Pacific, Normative Approach, Indian Foreign Policy, Japanese Foreign Policy.

Introduction of Normative Approach in IR

The study of International Relations (IR) is important to understand the behavior of a nation-state. Normative approach in IR is one of the important approaches to understand the nation-state's behavior amongst each other under the international system. The dominant 'realist' school of thought in IR explains "how states interact with each other or what it is"; on the other hand, normative approach stretches its focus upon 'what ought to be done' or how states should behave in international system based on common norms and values to sustain peace in the world. The study of normative approach in IR is to understand why states behave as they behave and how they should behave. The study is also important to build an international structure, system and societies based on universal norms and common values to construct a peaceful international system.

Indo-Japanese Co-operation since 2000

India and Japan are the emerging powers in the world and are perceived as major players in the security architecture of Asia and the Indo-Pacific. India is considered as a great power (Pardesi, 2015) and Japan is a major economic and technical hub for the world. Both countries are rising economies and share similar democratic ideas and values. Since the beginning of 21st century the relations between the India and Japan started enhancing across the sectors such as economics, technics, culture, security, defence and climate change etc.

The foundation of Indo-Japanese relations in the 21st century was Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's visit to India in August 2000, when he met his Indian counterpart, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (MEA India, 2013). They established 'global partnership in the 21st century'. In October 2008, India and Japan signed 'Joint declaration on security cooperation between India and Japan'. According to the both agreements they have agreed to cooperate in the areas such as: commitment to democracy, mutual stakes in each other's progress and prosperity, security in Asia and beyond, counterterrorism, non-

-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), disarmament, nuclear issues, long term stability of peace in Afghanistan, strengthening and reforms in the United Nations (UN), security of international maritime traffic and international shipping lanes, disaster management, countering arms, human and drugs trafficking (MOFA Japan, 2001) and many others.

To achieve those aforementioned goals, India and Japan have established the mechanisms such as maritime exercises, intelligence and information sharing, access to the port facilities, talks on Presidential and Prime ministerial level, 2+2 dialogues, talks on a military and diplomatic level on regular basis etc.

How and why do India and Japan come together? Areas of cooperation and the role of norms

The Indo-Japanese cooperation can be analyzed from global, regional and bilateral level in at least 10 different areas:

1. To construct and shape regional security architecture in the Indo-Pacific – being emerging economies and major powers in Asia and across the Indo-Pacific region, India and Japan both have agreed to cooperate and enhance strategic partnership to maintain rule-based world order, and to make a peaceful and prosperous region. Free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region is a common agenda between India and Japan. Both countries are cooperating to deal with a variety of global and regional security issues in the region;
2. Strengthening democracy and rule of law – India and Japan are both democratic countries, they share democratic norms and values. Respect for international law, rule-based world order, as well as peaceful resolution of disputes within the region and around the globe is their common agenda. E.g., India-Bangladesh resolved their maritime dispute according to a UN resolution (Habib, 2014);
3. Maritime security – Japan is an island country; India has a 7716 km coastline with 2,3 mil km² exclusive economic zone. Both are maritime countries. They have more than 90% of trade by sea routes. India and Japan both are dependent on energy resources from Gulf countries. That is why the protection

of sea lines of communication (SLOCs) is a significant aspect to serve their geoeconomics and geostrategic interests. Thus, both countries insist upon to maintain rule of law in oceans and engaged for cooperation in counter piracy and counter maritime terrorism in Indo-Pacific region. Non-proliferation of WMD is a major security concern across the globe in which both the countries are agreed to cooperate. The proliferation of WMD takes place from maritime routes. That is why maritime security is a major common agenda within two states;

4. Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations – the geographical expansion of the Indo-Pacific region is vast; the uncertain climate and weather creates disaster in the region. E.g. Indo-Pacific countries severely affected by the 2004 tsunami. The foundation of Quad (US, Japan, India, Australia) had place after the 2004 tsunami incident;
5. Counterterrorism – the South Asia and East Asia both are facing terrorism in the region. It is a grave threat to the world. Terrorism violates international laws and norms, thus India and Japan committed to fight against terrorism. Japanese and India militaries annually conducts counterterrorism military exercises. As well as, both have intelligence sharing agreement under the strategic cooperation;
6. Development programs in Afghanistan and Africa – India and Japan are engaging in development projects in Afghanistan to mitigate radicalization issues in the region. At the same time, both have common consensus to focus on the African continent for collective development plans. India and Japan are planning to further enhance cooperation on Asia-Africa economic corridor;
7. Cooperation in the United Nations – according to 1952's treaty of peace between India and Japan, both countries have agreed of maintenance of international peace and security in conformity with the principles of the charter of the United Nations (Choudhury, 2022, p. 282). The United Nations is the single platform where all the countries come together and discuss their issues to resolve. The UNSC (United Nations Security Council) has five permanent representatives who have 'veto' power during voting. India and Japan both are demanding to enhance the seats of permanent representatives in UNSC. Both

are pushing their case by supporting each other. India and Japan are part of G4 (Germany, Brazil, India, Japan) grouping which are pushing each other's bid to get permanent seat in UN. Apart from UNSC, India and Japan are active participants in UN peacekeeping operations. It shows their commitment and contribution to the global peace, security and in conflict resolution. Under the bilateral security agreement, both countries have agreed to enhance their security cooperation for regional and global peace;

8. To contain the assertive rise of China – China's historical claim over the South China Sea (SCS) is against the international law, particularly UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea). China claims the entire territory of SCS with the islands popularly known as 'nine dash line' claim. The littoral countries of the SCS region consider it as a violation of UNCLOS. The strategist and policymakers both from India and Japan see it from the perspective of the violation of 'maritime territorial sovereignty'. S. Kalyanaraman, former research fellow at IDSA, India, said during his presentation in IDSA that "78% of wars from 1648 to 1945 were conquests for territories and redistribution of territories. From 1945-2000 it declined to 27%. And the major reason behind the decline of war for territorial conquest is the idea of territorial sovereignty and international norms under the United Nations which proscribed states to violate territorial integrity of other states" (Kalyanaraman, 2017). Widespread acceptance of international norms and preservation of status quo is important. In the 21st century with the context of East Asia, norms are getting violated by China in SCS. It plays a determinant normative factor between India and Japan. China's rise in South Asia is a negatively perceived in New Delhi. India and Japan are conducting joint development projects in Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri-Lanka; as well as further planning in Africa. Basrur and Kutty in their article "Modi's India and Japan: nested strategic partnership", argued that India and Japan are using normative weapons to contain China and those shared norms are rule-based order and free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region (Basrur, Kutty, 2021). However, India and Japan both are balancing and cooperating with China, due to their complex economic interdependency with China;

9. Regional institutions – regional institutions play a major role in IR as well as it has significance in the literature of English School in IR. In the case of Indo-Japanese relations, Japan supported India's case for membership at the East Asian Summit (Jain, 2008). ASEAN is a one of the most important economic regional institutions in Indo-Pacific. India's has given ASEAN centrality in its vision towards the Indo-Pacific. The formation of QUAD grouping (US, India, Japan, Australia) in Indo-Pacific region is also considered as informal grouping and an emerging institution in the region to enhance strategic and comprehensive partnership;
10. Climate Change, energy and food security – due to the impact of climate change, India has set its objective of net-zero carbon emission by 2070. To achieve this objective, Japan can play a big role. Japan fulfills its energy requirements from nuclear energy, which is considered as clean energy. Nuclear cooperation is on agenda between the two countries, which would help India to reduce its carbon footprints. In 2016, India signed Civil Nuclear Cooperation with Japan. During earlier phases of discussion, Japan was not ready to sign a civil nuclear agreement with India, because India have nuclear weapons in its arsenals. However, over the period of time the talks had been progressed and the deal signed. India and Japan have common understanding that the nuclear energy should be used for the greater cause of humanity. Due to such de facto normative understanding, the talks progressed and civil nuclear cooperation deal signed.

Due to climate change, the degradation in food quality is another concern raised by the agriculture scientists of both countries. In order to find out the solution, academic and research institutions from India and Japan are cooperating in research with each other. They are also trying to inculcate information technology (IT), artificial intelligence (AI), internet of things (IoT) in the agriculture sector to enhance the quality of food (Ninomiya, 2022). In 2021 both countries agreed to establish a joint credit mechanism (JCM) and coalition for disaster resilience infrastructure (CDRI) (ANI, 2021).

An article by Andrew Moravcsik contributes a significant amount in the literature of normative approach in IR. Apart from the global, regional and bilateral security issues and norms, some of the liberal assumptions do play a role in bringing Japan and India together.

Core Assumptions of Liberal theory in IR

Andrew Moravcsik, a liberal IR scholar in his paper entitled “Taking preferences seriously: a liberal theory of international politics” mentioned following three core assumptions of liberal theory which are significant in the study of Normative approach in IR:

1. The primacy of societal actors
2. Representation and state preferences
3. Interdependence and international system.

‘Primacy of societal actors’ means role of individuals, historical and cultural linkages. It also plays a major role in IR. In the case of India and Japan, the famous Indian personalities like Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, political leaders like former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe played a major role in bringing India and Japan socio-politically together. There are multiple cultural similarities between India and Japan, which makes them natural partners. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing to the Indian diaspora during his visit to Tokyo in May 2022 highlighted the cultural similarities between the two states (Modi, 2022b). Table 1 shows that there are similar and parallel social believes between India and Japan.

Table 1.

India	Japan
Lord Shiva	Daikokuten
Brahma	Bonten
Mother Saraswati	Benzaiten
Mahadevi Lakshmi	Kichijoten
Ganesha	Kangiten
Meditation	Zen

Source: Author’s own compilation based on data from Prime Minister’s Address to the Indian Community in Tokyo, Japan (23rd May 2022); https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/35349/English_Translation_of_Prime_Ministers_address_to_the_Indian_Community_in_Tokyo_Japan.

India's great spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda and great poet Rabindranath Tagore both have praised Japan. They said, Japan is ancient and modern at the same time. There are spiritual similarities between India and Japan. Buddhism is another common factor which drives both countries to come together. India's Prime Minister N. Modi is himself a spiritually oriented personality and elected to the Indian parliament from the Banaras constituency, which is known as the cultural capital of India. Thus, spirituality as a societal factor plays a major role in Japan-India relations. The personal relationship and positive bond between Narendra Modi and former Japanese PM Shinzō Abe played a major role to enhance ties between India and Japan. PM Narendra Modi had relations with PM Abe when Modi was Chief Minister of Gujarat state in India. When PM Abe got killed and died on 8th July 2022; PM Modi wrote an article on Shinzō Abe, which has covered and published by daily newspapers in India.

As per the 2nd assumption of liberal theory of Andrew Moravcsik, 'representation and state preferences' also play a major role, that means the role of domestic government and regional policies. The Indian and Japanese industrial and economic sectors are engaging and interacting with each other. Both are having close cooperation and implementing developmental projects, e.g., Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project, development projects in Gujarat or Japanese commitment of investment in the North-eastern region of India. The development of North Eastern region of India is essential for India's Act east policy. The Indian diaspora also plays a significant role in Indo-Japanese relations; many Indians went to Japan for the sake of employment and later they married and settled in Japan (Modi, 2022b). This is a significant variable that plays a role in bringing closer Indo-Japanese cooperation.

The third assumption is 'interdependence and international system'. India and Japan are closely cooperating to combat COVID-19 by vaccine diplomacy and Quad vaccine initiative. Climate change is another grave threat in front of humanity where both countries are having closer cooperation. Japan has advanced technology as well as experience to deal against natural calamities, which would help India to overcome disasters occurred due to natural calamities and climate change (Modi, 2022b). PM Modi in his speech at Tokyo asserted that

“Japan is playing a major role in India’s growth” (Modi, 2022b). Domestically, India wants to become self-reliant in all possible sectors in which Japan plays a role, as well as stable and sustainable global supply chain build up is another target by both countries. This is how ‘interdependence and international system’ plays a role to bring India-Japan together for closer partnership.

Conclusion

Aspects mentioned above shows that India and Japan are closely cooperating to maintain rule-based world order, to strengthen the security of the region, and to make the region prosperous. Climate change, cyber and space security are newly emerging aspects in security on which both countries have agreed to cooperate. Rule of law, free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific are shared norms between India and Japan. China’s assertive rise is also an important variable between the cooperation of India and Japan as both sees Chinese activities from the perspective of violation of norms. The liberal assumptions such as societal preferences, representation of state preferences and interdependence and international system plays a significant role in Indo-Japanese cooperation. Thus, to maintain and strengthen international norms, regional and global security cooperation based on shared norms and values are the dominant factor between India and Japan.

After the ‘treaty of peace’ signed between the government of Japan and India in June 1952, there is no ‘norm’ or ‘rule agreement’ as such has been signed between the two countries; however, their common and broader normative understanding towards the world, driving and shaping bilateral relationship based on normative principles.

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