

Evaluating The Relevance Of Non-Alignment Movement (NAM)

Dr. Nanjundamurthy

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science,
Government First Grade College – Jayanagara, Bangalore-70

Abstract:

This research paper has a special focus upon the very premises for which Non-Alignment Movement was given birth. This paper tries to answer what Non-Aligned Movement is doing presently? Is Non-Aligned Movement in 21st Century: Relevant or Redundant. Cold war got ended up in 1990's. So, some scholars are of the opinion that Non-Aligned Movement remains no more relevant now and it has served its purpose. But on the other hand so many scholars are of the view that, "Non-Aligned Movement's mission remains more relevant than ever; in the light of growing gulf between the rich and poor countries" The fact is that the collapse of the bi-polar system and emergence of unipolarity in political, economic and military terms is leading to further inequality and injustice and, hence, the role of Non-Aligned Movement becomes much more important as a counterforce to unilateral military and economic coercion.

Key words: Non Alignment, Unipolarity, Economic coercion, Impact.

Introduction:

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a group of states which was not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. As of 2013, the movement has 120 members and 17 observer countries. The organization was founded in Belgrade in 1961, and was largely conceived by India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru; Burma's first Prime Minister U Nu; Indonesia's first president, Sukarno; Egypt's second president, Gamal Abdel Nasser; Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah; and Yugoslavia's president, Josip Broz Tito. All six leaders were prominent advocates of a middle course for states in the Developing World between the Western and Eastern blocs in the Cold War.

The emergence of Non-Aligned Movement in the cold war situation provided the world politics a new twist. For the newly independent countries Non-Aligned Movement became a protector to escape from race of militarization promoted by two world powers at that time i.e. USSR and USA. Non-alignment countries were in favour of disarmament and were against social discrimination. It emerged as great moral force and initiated the co-operation for world peace in cold war era. The policy of Non-alignment that is staying away from alliance should not be considered as neutrality or isolation.

Causes for formation of Non-Aligned Movement

Non-Aligned Movement existence can be called the contribution of many positive and negative aspects arising at that time in the international politics. The various major causes that led to formation of Non-Aligned Movement are as follows:

Nationalist feeling: The newly decolonized nation was deeply enriched with the feeling of the nationalism and at that point of time was not willing to compromise at any stage with its freedom and henceforth this nationalist feeling and love for one's nation paved a path for the formation of policy that secure integrity and sovereignty of these small countries. In this context Non-Aligned Movement fulfilled the desired requirement and came into existence.

Economic development: After the country been decolonized its foremost object is to attain economic development so same with these countries at that time, they try and focus on economic development. And if they join any of the power blocks the economic condition of those countries would further get weaker. So Non-Aligned Movement as non-alignment policy was most desirable to secure the economic development.

Cultural and racial aspects: The newly independent countries share the common cultural and racial aspects. So to preserve and promote their cultural and racial aspects they came together and unite in form of Non-Aligned Movement. They found that they have common problems regarding polity, economic and social system which could be discuss for all member nation country to bring development in those newly underdeveloped countries.

End of Second World War: With the end of cold war the political environment of the world turning more hostile and unfriendly and cold war came into existence. The world was divided into two power blocks both seeking and attaining its own goal and tried to increase its alliance and support from small and less powerful countries. So to avoid this system of alliance newly freedom attained countries opted for Non-Aligned Movement as policy of non-alignment.

Military alliance: When Non-Aligned Movement came into existence it was the time when cold war was at its apex. And military alliance was the key feature of the two power block. They tried to add more and small countries to them, so to avoid this military alliance new decolonized nation opted for policy of Non-Aligned Movement as with military alliance their economic and political stability cannot be attained.

Fear of colonialism and imperialism: There was deep seated fear in the entire newly decolonized nation that in future they might not get under any powerful nation as colonies for them. So this fear makes them unite together and ask for their protection of integrity and sovereignty of nation, freedom to follow its own foreign policy and they looked upon Non-Aligned Movement as best policy for their need and Non-Aligned Movement came into existence.

Qualification required becoming member of Non-Aligned Movement

When Non-Aligned Movement was formed certain qualification was laid down by founding members for the new nation who wanted to join Non-Aligned Movement. The various qualification of Non-Aligned Movement are as follows: 1. Having independent foreign policy. 2. Having sovereign state. 3. Peace loving country. 4. Not aligned with any power blocks. 5. Mutual respect for every nation's sovereignty and territory. 6. Non-interference in domestic affairs. 7. Avoidance of aggression. 8. Promote equality, co-operation and benefit for all nation.

Relevance of Non-Aligned Movement:

Non-Aligned Movement founded during the height of Soviet-US confrontation in the mid 1950's. Its political bearing has diminished in the post-cold war environment with the disintegration of USSR but Non-Aligned Movement is still relevant in today's international environment. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on July 15, 2009, the relevance of the Non-aligned movement has “Never been greater than today” and called for greater solidarity among members in tackling challenges, including the financial crisis, energy security, climate change and the UN reforms”. History has shown that non-alignment is an idea that evolved but does not fade. We must take it forward, harnessing it to meet the challenges of today,” Manmohan Singh said on the opening day of the 15th Non-Aligned Movement summit that is attended by 118 leaders from developing countries. Invoking the words of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at the first Non-Aligned Movement conference in 1961, Manmohan Singh said: “The Power of nation assembled here is not military power or economic power, nevertheless it is power”. Underlining the importance of Non-Aligned Movement in addressing contemporary global problems, Manmohan Singh said the 15th summit was being held amid the world's worst economic crisis in living memory. “The Non-Aligned Movement has a great stake in ensuring that steps planned to revive the global economy take into account the concern of developing countries,” he said. “These include the challenges of food security, the environment and the reform of institutions of global governance,” Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said in 16th summit of Non-Aligned Movement held at Tehran (Iran) in August, 2012, in which Non-Aligned Movement's membership raised upto 120: Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said, “Our shared objectives of working together to preserve our strategic space, ensure social and economic development and strive for more just and equitable world order, remain as true and relevant today as they were in the past.”

Now the present world scenario is in a slow but steady pace. Uni-polar is slowly shifting to multi-polar world. And eager to look into matter of global economic issues. Even G8 realized that they cannot withstand without developing nations in this phase of acute crisis. So Non-Aligned Movement an non-aligned system can play a big role in controlling and changing the present international environment. With the passage of time Non-Aligned Movement emerged as a political personality of its own. It survived the cold war and out-living it. The relevance of Non-Aligned Movement can be traced from the following points.

Preservation of the world peace: Non-Aligned Movement after so many years of foundation it still abide by its founding principles, idea and purpose i.e. to establish peaceful and prosperous world. It promoted disarmament and even prohibited invasion of any country, henceforth creation a sovereign world order.

Preservation of territorial integrity and sovereignty: Nam proved its repeated relevance with the ideal of preserving independence of every nation. This policy will survive long lasting till the time sovereign nation state exists irrespective of any periodical, marginal changes, in the existing system all over the world. It has repeated relevance in every stage till the concept of international relation exists. So weather world is uni-polar, multi-polar or bi-polar Non-Aligned Movement as policy will grow stronger.

Platform of Third World nations: Third world countries fighting against sociological- economical problems since they have been exploited for long time by other developed nation, after end of colonization their new motives is to look forward for development. In this situation Non-Aligned Movement acted as a protector for these new formed small countries against the western hegemony. Not only has this it empowered the member states to take its own decisions without any external influence.

Support of UN: Non-Aligned Movement total strength comprises of 120 developing countries and most of them being member of UN general assembly. IT represents 2/3 members of general assembly hence Non-Aligned Movement members act as important vote blocking group in UN.

Promoting equitable world order: Non-Aligned Movement promotes equitable world order. It specifies same ideal foreign policy for all nations. It acts as bridge between political differences existing in the international environment. It arose as consensual policy on burning topic of current world politics to which the vast majority of nation could subscribe.

Check on big power ambitions: Non-Aligned Movement constitute of 120 developing nation and this overwhelming strength of this third world nation act as a check on big power ambitions. It stood as a unifying force against the traditional foreign policy of great powers and strictly restricts imperialism, nationalism and universal-ism.

Base of South-South co-operation: Non-Aligned Movement acts as catalyst to foster the co-operation between south -south nation. It raises issues that are of major concern for the south countries. It initiates economic, political and social development corners to achieve the desired result of moving from developing to developed nations.

Integral part of foreign policy: Non-Aligned Movement as foreign policy is very much relevant till today even after the disintegration of USSR. Many developing nation including India still follows Non-Aligned Movement policy as its major international and foreign policy tool. The policy to avoid colonization and imperialism continues to remain valid for all small and developing countries.

Peaceful settlement of International disputes: Non-Aligned Movement since its foundation act as platform that protects the interest of developing countries. It protect it from the huge and influential power in the international sphere, so if disputes arises between developed and developing nation at any point of concerned topic then Non-Aligned Movement act as platform which negotiate and conclude disputes peacefully securing the favourable decisions for each member nation.

Alternative world power: Non-Aligned Movement with passage of time emerged as the alternative world power. With its strength and its motive to democratize the international system proved its qualification as alternative world order which would promote equality and peace all over the world and even provide new dynamics to the existing world's politics.

Voice of developing nations: Non-Aligned Movement is emerging as majority day by day, each year its strength increases which act as a force and give its members to put their point on international issues.

Integral component of north-south co-operation: Non-Aligned Movement acts as a unifying force representing developing countries interest. Hence it plays an important role in north-south dialogue on different issues and accomplishment of different goals for betterment of the world.

Criticism of US policy: Non-Aligned Movement played active role in criticizing the US policy on various events. US action such as invasion of Iraq and the war on terrorism, Iran and North Korea's nuclear plant have been attempted to stifle by US have been brought to notice by Non-Aligned Movement as violation of human right and committing roughshod means to denounce the sovereignty of smaller nations.

Self determination of Puerto Rico: Puerto Rico self determination case has been supported By Non-Aligned Movement since 1961 by discussing it before United Nation.

Self determination for Western Sahara: Non-Aligned Movement like with the case of Puerto Rico supported for self determination of Western Sahara before United Nation since 1973. It in 2009 reminded United Nation once again on the case of self determination of Western Sahara.

Cultural diversity and human rights: Non-Aligned Movement is said to be the protector of human rights and propagated the existence of cultural diversity. They even promoted societal-cultural concept and the tolerance of religion. Non-Aligned Movement always remain active to secure the human right of every nation and if found it being violated it stand for its protection.

Sustainable development: Non-Aligned Movement supported the concept of sustainable development. They even determine what are the factors which hinder the development and discuss it at large where ever get the platform including United Nations.

Conclusion

Hence relevance of Non-Aligned Movement is well justified from all the above mentioned points. Non-Aligned Movement since its formation always abides to its principle and purpose to attain peace and to keep itself non-aligned to any power blocks. The success of Non-Aligned Movement can be well traced from its ever growing membership each year. Even after the end of cold war the membership drastically increased and it's still increasing at a rapid speed justifying its perpetual relevance in the present international environment. Further Non-Aligned Movement as policy of weak and small state will continue to remain valid as long as there is concept of sovereign nation states and perpetual war for power. Non-Aligned Movement propagated the concept of sovereign states based on independence and equality will continue forever irrespective of existence of bipolar, uni-polar or multi-polar world system. Non-Aligned Movement nature and scope changed but its relevance thrives to the height of success in the contemporary world. In-fact its relevance is being more prominent than ever before, in present scenario Non-Aligned Movement nature is more inclined towards economic relevance than political relevance. Hence Non-Aligned Movement in the present time is well embedded in the international politics, its role has vital impact and it emerged as powerful creed which is more powerful than the two power block put together at that time

References

Books

- 1) K Raman Pillai (Ed), "*India and Non-Alignment in the 1990s*". Radiant publishers (New Delhi 1997)
- 2) Narang .S.A, "*NAM in The New Millennium: Challenges and Issues*" (New Delhi,2001)
- 3) Dutt Radar, "*NAM- Its Relevance in Unipolar World*". (New Delhi,2001)
- 4) Guy Arnold, "*Historical Dictionary of the Non-aligned Movement and Third World*", (Scarecrow Press, Incorporated, 2006)

Articles:

- 1) Mehta S J, "*Non- Alignment- Mission Accomplished*" "Indian Express" (Bombay, October 3, 1991).
- 2) Vanaik Achin, "*National Interest: A flawed notion, Indian Foreign Policy Since , 1991*" (Economic and Political Weekly Vol XLI, No 49 ,2006)
- 3) Vanaik Achin, "*Post-Cold War Indian Foreign Policy*" (Seminar , June 2008).
- 4) Arshad Rasool , Arihal Pulwama, "*Non-Aligned Movement in 21st Century: Relevant or Redundant? ...A Debate*". (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 11, Issue 4 (May. - Jun. 2013).

News papers/Magazine:

- 1) The Hindu
- 2) Frontline
- 3) Indian Express
- 4) Times of India

