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Strategic Culture and Environmental Security in India

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Abstract

The last decade of the 20th century has pushed the concept of environmental security as an urgent issue for reconsideration through the Rio Earth Summit of 1992. Our Earth's very survival has confronted the threat of global warming and climate change and posed a challenge to human existence, which has called for the sustainable development of the human world and the environment's security. Thus, with the 21st century, the environment's security has become a strategic issue for developed and developing countries worldwide. However, India's voice among the world nations differed from the common concern that development is the leading cause of its destruction. India looks upon the environment as a means of livelihood and poverty alleviation for millions of people of the nation which dominates all discourses on the environment and its allied issues like climate change and sustainable development. This is only because of India's tradition in the security of the environment and the strategic culture. Thus, this paper analyses the strategic culture's influence, informing India's national and international environmental policies since independence.

Keywords: Environment, security, strategic culture, climate change, India.

Introduction

The last decade of the 20th century has pushed the concept of environmental security as an urgent issue for reconsideration through the Rio Earth Summit of 1992. Our Earth's very survival has confronted the threat of global warming and climate change and posed a challenge to human existence, which has called for the sustainable development of the human world and the environment's security. Thus, with the 21st century, the environment's security became a strategic issue for developed and developing countries worldwide. Men's idea is that as the master of the Earth, he has widely prevailed after the industrial revolution in contrast to the reality that man and environment co-define each other. Today the pre-modern worldview of coherence of people and environment has survived the test of time over the centuries and sustained by the people worldwide (Sashinungla, 2002). In India, the pre-modern culture of sustaining the environment's security has repercussions even in the post-modern era due to its peculiarities and conservation practices. The world of alarming voices on sustainable development and climate change mitigation calls for an in-depth search on India's strategic culture in preserving environmental security.

The term 'strategic culture' had begun to popularise among the American defence intellectuals in the 1970s. The term has spread out to the academic circle discussions with the publication of Jack L. Snyder's report titled *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations in 1977* (Garretson, 2013). He used the term to elucidate the reasons for the negative behaviour of Soviet leaders following the rational choice theory where actors concentrate on best choice contingent on anticipations about what other players will do. The definition he has given to the term strategic culture is 'the total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share about nuclear strategy'. Further, he added that 'the body of attitudes and beliefs that guides and circumscribes thought on strategic questions influence; however, strategic issues are formulated and sets the vocabulary and conceptual parameters of strategic debate'. His definition and discussions on strategic culture were primarily based on the strategic behaviour of the Soviet Union against American nuclear policy change, but it opened an arena for sparking debate on strategic culture beyond boundaries (Snyder, 1977).

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