

India's Soft Power Image: A Case Study of the Indian Economy under Modi

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Abstract

Soft power, being power of attraction, is non-violent and enables behavioral change through tangible and intangible persuasion. Unlike coercive military power, it emanates from the culture, political ideals, strategic aspirations, and economic dividends of a state. Soft power image may require decades to be established but remains vulnerable to state actions. Soft power, as an essentially a fluid concept, involves multiple, multidimensional, and multilayered policies. India's sustained economic growth played a pivotal role in constructing its soft power image. Narendra Damodardas Modi became India's Prime Minister in 2014 with the promise to improve economy - the idea generally known as shinning India. Modi's demonetization decision in 2016 triggered economic meltdown which is worsening till to date. This research study is analytical and descriptive in nature, and endeavors to focus on the Indian economy as a case study vis-à-vis impact of its slowdown on India's soft power image. It hypothesizes that India's soft power

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image under Narendra Modi has eroded significantly owing to his domestic and economic policies.

Keywords: India's Soft power, Indian Economy, Narendra Modi, Hindutva, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Introduction

National Power is the ability or capability of a nation to secure the goals and objectives of its national interests in relation with other nations. It is the capacity to use force or threat of use of force or influence over others for securing the goals of national interest. Hans J. Morgenthau explained power as "the power of man on others" and as a "man's control over the minds and actions of other men."² However Schwarzenberger in his book *Power Politics* described Power as "the capacity to impose one's will on others by reliance on effective sanctions in case of non-compliance."³ National power is defined as a combination of power and capability of a state which it uses to fulfill its national interests and goals. It is the capability and preparedness of a state to compel her enemy to do something or to deter her from doing something. In contemporary international system war is not cost effective in terms of economic cost, human cost, and destruction. Therefore, modern day warfare is about attaining national interest without fighting. Several theorists have considered it as the supreme excellent strategy. In this context soft power is a force multiplier. It becomes the states' international image which is an important focus of international politics in today's era of image fare.

Known as the power of attraction, the soft power is defined as the

² Mihaela Neacsu, *Hans J. Morgenthau's Theory of International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 54.

³ ND Arora, *Political Science for Civil Services Examinations* (NEW Delhi: TATA Mcgraw Hill Education Private Limited, 2010), 35.