

Regional Party Dynamics and their Influence in Indian Foreign Policy

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ABSTRACT

Indian foreign policy is frequently influenced by a multifaceted interaction of regional and national interests, wherein state-level political entities play an instrumental role in shaping pivotal diplomatic determinations. This paper investigates the manner in which regional party dynamics affect India's foreign policy, utilizing two case studies: the Teesta Water Sharing Agreement with Bangladesh and the involvement of Dravidian parties in the formulation of Indo-Sri Lankan relations.

The Teesta water agreement exemplifies the impact of West Bengal's ruling entity, particularly the Trinamool Congress (TMC), in hindering a significant bilateral accord between India and Bangladesh. Notwithstanding the diplomatic endeavors by the central administration, apprehensions regarding water allocation and electoral considerations in West Bengal culminated in the deal's indefinite deferral, thereby illustrating the influence of regional interests on international negotiations.

In a related context, the Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu have influenced India's stance on Sri Lanka considerably, especially in terms of Tamil rights and the situation of Tamil minorities. Their political advocacy has prompted alterations in India's engagement with Sri Lanka, thereby affecting decisions related to economic relations, military collaboration, and diplomatic resolutions within international arenas.

Keywords- Regional Party, Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics, Coalition Politics.

I. INTRODUCTION

India operates as a democratic nation wherein the Union government, alongside its states and regions, navigates the principles of federalism. The Indian federation exemplifies a union of states and serves as a quintessential illustration of unity amidst diversity. Numerous Indian states possess profound cultural and religious connections with various nations throughout Asia. Furthermore, due to their geographical proximity, states are compelled to acknowledge the repercussions of decisions made at the central level. The formulation of foreign policy for a multi-national entity such as India presents significant challenges, being influenced by cultural, religious, regional aspirations, and the necessity

for economic benefits. Generally, the central government of India has exhibited a reluctance to delegate authority to the states concerning foreign policy matters. The influence of regional political factions within India's governance has greatly affected the shaping and advancement of the nation's international policy, notably in regard to its nearby neighbors and extensive global ties.

This inquiry seeks to investigate the impact of regional political entities on Indian foreign policy, scrutinizing particular historical contexts and the methodologies utilized by these entities to advocate for their respective interests. The examination incorporates findings from an array of scholarly studies to furnish a holistic comprehension of this intricate interaction.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Blarel, N., & Van Willigen, N. (2021) elucidated that a considerable portion of the research conducted to date has concentrated on contexts wherein subnational political entities and the central authorities of multinational states exhibit divergences regarding foreign policy matters. It has been asserted that various factors play a significant role in determining whether central governments opt to integrate the perspectives of minor regional parties into their foreign policy frameworks or to assimilate these parties in pursuit of their own foreign policy objectives. Numerous scholars have scrutinized the dynamics of decentralization and the configurations of federal power within a state's governmental structure, with the aim of providing political entities with enhanced authority over the formulation of the state's foreign policy.

Happymon Jacob (2016), The text commences by outlining how the foreign policy in India has often been regarded as the singular duty of the central administration. Traditionally, regional states possessed minimal influence, with pivotal decisions being concentrated at the center, a custom that can be traced back to the era of Nehru and the predominance of the Congress political framework. It articulates that, notwithstanding the fact that India's constitution affords the central government a near-monopolistic control over foreign relations, certain exceptions and informal mechanisms have permitted states to express their interests, particularly concerning border conflicts and resource management challenges. This concise literature review positions the manuscript as a thorough yet comprehensible investigation into the transforming role of Indian states in influencing foreign policy, skillfully integrating historical context, empirical case studies, and institutional scrutiny alongside pragmatic recommendations.

Jaskolska, A. (2015) conducted an analysis of the influence exerted by party politics on the formulation of India's foreign policy, utilizing it as a case study. The nation under examination was India. A meticulous review of the political party dynamics in India is showcased, starting with the leading role of a single-party system and progressively evolving into a multiparty system (this historical context is occasionally misnamed as a one-party system, despite being misleading).

N K Jha (2002), The manuscript delineates a comprehensive analysis of the coalition era in India, with particular focus on its ramifications for the nation's foreign policy. The manuscript systematically reviews the progression of coalition governments within the Indian political landscape. It highlights that, despite common perceptions regarding the inception of this era in the mid-1990s, there exists substantial evidence indicating an earlier commencement. By elucidating the interplay between domestic political coalitions and

foreign policy determinations, the research furnishes critical insights into how internal governance frameworks can significantly influence international relations. In conclusion, the literature review encompassed in this manuscript not only reinterprets the historical narrative surrounding Indian coalition politics but also accentuates its complex interrelation with the nation's foreign policy initiatives. This reexamination offers novel insights that have the potential to transform our comprehension of contemporary Indian governance and its global implications. The scholarly work functions as both a historical record and a nuanced critique that may catalyze further academic discourse on this pertinent topic.

Nicolas Blarel (2019), Nicolas Blarel's study, *Coalition Politics and the Making of Indian Foreign Policy: A New Research Program* investigates the manner in which coalition politics in India influences its foreign policy through the impact of regional political entities. It synthesizes two distinct academic trajectories: one that concentrates on coalition formation within the context of foreign policy discourse and another that underscores the significance of decentralization and federal authority in international relations. The inquiry posits whether regional political parties possess the capacity to influence India's foreign policy and under which circumstances such influence may manifest.

It delves into the notion of coalitional pressure—whereby smaller regional parties sway policy decisions through their electoral support—and the notion of regional salience, whereby particular foreign policy matters resonate more intensely with specific geographic locales. The manuscript accentuates that coalition politics in India are predicated not solely on national level alliances but also encompass partnerships at the state level. This engenders a complex, multi-tiered framework wherein national political entities must account for regional exigencies during the formulation of foreign policy. Furthermore, the research contends that national political parties are not merely susceptible to external influences; rather, they frequently navigate these coalition dynamics with strategic intent to formulate equilibrated foreign policy decisions.

Ranjan. A & Chattoraj. D (2022), The study investigates India's progressively nuanced strategy concerning the Tamil predicament in Sri Lanka, underscoring a historical narrative characterized by intricate interactions between humanitarian imperatives and geostrategic considerations. A significant dimension of the scholarship addressed in the manuscript pertains to the impact of Tamil Nadu's political dynamics on India's overarching position.

Regional political entities, notably the DMK and AIADMK, have intermittently advocated for enhanced support or alternative methodologies regarding the Tamil cause, thereby influencing India's domestic policy discussions and even its international voting conduct in forums such as the UNHRC. The manuscript

illustrates that while India has consistently expressed concern for the human rights of Tamils, its policy frameworks have predominantly been shaped by strategic calculations aimed at preserving its hegemony in South Asia.

III. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This manuscript examines the extent to which domestic pressures and political dynamics shape the processes involved in foreign policy decision-making. In alignment with the conceptual framework articulated by Robert Putnam's 'two level game', and integrating the insights from James Rosenau's Pre-Theory alongside his Linkage Politics, as well as Joe Hagan's 'Political opposition model', this study investigates the ways in which both domestic and international interactions intricately influence the evolution of foreign policy. The concept of the "two level game" posits that domestic actors exert influence over governmental decisions, with the government concurrently endeavoring to address these domestic pressures while simultaneously balancing the demands of international interests. Linkage Politics delves into the critical role that domestic variables play in shaping foreign policy, thereby urging scholars to recognize that political parties function as pivotal entities that significantly affect the formulation of foreign policy.

IV. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research investigates the influence of regional political entities in the formulation of India's foreign policy during the decade spanning from 2004 to 2014, a timeframe characterized by considerable political, economic, and strategic transformations under coalition governance. It analyzes the mechanisms through which regional parties have impacted foreign policy, including parliamentary discourse, political advocacy, public narratives, and diplomatic interactions. Notwithstanding the constraints imposed by constitutional provisions, regional parties have been instrumental in shaping policy decisions, particularly within coalition frameworks. By employing three case studies, this study evaluates the repercussions of domestic political rivalries on the development of foreign policy, thereby underscoring India's significance within the scholarly discourse on coalition governments (N. Blarel & Van Wiligen, 2020).

V. METHODOLOGY

In this examination, both exploratory and analytical techniques are applied to assess how opposition and regional parties (TMC, DMK, AIADMK) have influenced India's foreign policy during UPA-II's period. By employing qualitative research techniques, it conducts an in-depth analysis of illustrative case studies

such as the Indo-Bangladesh Water Agreement and India's policy towards Sri Lanka. The study is predominantly based on secondary sources, supplemented by select primary data obtained from parliamentary discussions and constitutional documents. A historical, descriptive, and analytical framework is adopted to evaluate the impact of regional parties on national policy formulation. The research delves into the intricacies of decision-making processes, the dynamics of domestic politics, and the associated rhetoric, culminating in significant insights regarding the influence of regional parties on foreign policy within the context of Indian federalism.

VI. REGIONAL PARTIES IN COALITION CONTEXT

This paper intends to bring the politics of federalism and coalition together to understand how regionalisation in political space influences foreign policy regimes and preferences in a federal states like India. While such parties are usually overrepresented in regional legislatures, they are frequently underrepresented in national parliaments. Focusing on dynamics of multi-tiered bargaining between a national party at the head of the central government and regional parties in both the national parliament and state assemblies (Chhibber and Murali, 2006). Much will depend not just on the small no of parliament seats packed by a regional party to a coalition but also its strength in numbers as obedience in its respective state legislature. This double-layered influence is critical in making sense of their role in shaping central government policies. The hypothesized outcomes and how they depend on the presence or absence of strong regional preferences and multilevel coalitional arrangements is shown below



We therefore propose four potential outcomes that illustrate various combinations of regional preference and coalition structure. (1) Initially, the lack of robust regional preferences alongside a multilevel coalition framework results in the nonexistence of regional party influence, consequently diminishing the pressure on the central government to grant significant

foreign policy concessions to the regional party. (2) In the third scenario, the existence of a multilevel coalition framework compels the national government to accommodate a regional party; however, the lack of strong regional party preference permits the occurrence of logrolling (Oktay, 2018; Snyder, 1991), a coalition negotiation scenario in which a regional party exchanges its vote on a foreign policy matter for unrelated benefits (concessions not tied to the foreign policy issue). (3) In the third scenario, while there is an absence of a multilevel coalition framework, a pronounced regional preference exists. In this situation, the anticipation of upcoming elections and subsequent coalition negotiations motivates the central government to consider minor foreign policy concessions to appease substantial regional party preferences. (4) Lastly, the combination of a multilevel coalition framework and a strong regional preference drives the national government to provide foreign policy concessions to address the concerns of the regional party.

This framework not only highlights the dynamics of regional party influence but also raises questions about the broader implications for national foreign policy coherence. As observed in various case studies, the interplay between regional preferences and coalition structures can lead to significant shifts in foreign policy priorities, particularly when regional parties leverage their positions to advocate for localized interests that may conflict with national objectives (Narang and Staniland, 2018). Moreover, the reliance on multilevel coalitional arrangements often results in a delicate balancing act where national leaders must navigate competing demands from both regional partners and their electoral base, potentially leading to compromises that dilute the effectiveness of foreign policy initiatives (Adeney and Saez, 2005; Sridharan, 2012). Thus, understanding these intricate relationships becomes crucial for predicting how domestic political landscapes will shape international engagements in federal systems like India's.

VII. ROLE OF REGIONAL PARTIES IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

For an extended period, prevailing international relations theories have posited that national electoral outcomes are predominantly influenced by domestic policy considerations, thus affording political leaders considerable latitude in their foreign policy formulation. Consequently, numerous scholars have reached the conclusion that a governmental elite possesses exclusive authority over foreign policy to effectively safeguard the national interest. For instance, the mechanisms of foreign policy decision-making within the Indian context have conventionally been understood as a narrowly delineated entity, predominantly comprising the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's Office, and the Ministry of External Affairs, all of which are roles regulated by a singular

political party (Narang & Staniland, 2012). Nevertheless, scholarly inquiry has increasingly directed its attention toward the politicization of foreign policy-making within democratic contexts. Empirical studies have indicated that diverse domestic institutional frameworks—such as the presence of presidential versus parliamentary systems, the autonomy or constraints placed on executives, and the degree of openness or closure of institutions—either facilitate or restrict the capacity of political parties to influence foreign policy decisions. Within this corpus of scholarship, the discourse surrounding the impact of multiparty coalition governments on foreign policy formulation is particularly salient for this investigation. Drawing upon theoretical constructs from institutionalist theory (concerning the function of veto players) and social psychology (pertaining to group-level bargaining dynamics), researchers have illustrated how coalition politics can result in both compromises in foreign policy as well as significant deviations from established foreign policy norms, in addition to delays in decision-making and instances of non-decision. Notably, certain scholars have demonstrated that the configurations of coalition-building facilitate the integration of the concerns of minor political parties into foreign policy decisions (Coticchia & Davidson, 2018). For instance, minor parties may leverage blackmailing strategies to threaten withdrawal of their support (and potentially defect from the coalition) in order to exert disproportionate influence over foreign policy. Conversely, major political parties may strategically utilize foreign policy decisions to mobilize resources and divert scrutiny from the evident electoral vulnerabilities of their coalition governments, thereby consolidating the backing of smaller part.

Regional parties play a crucial role in influencing the dynamics of Indian foreign policy, often reflecting localized interests and regional aspirations that can impact national strategy. These political entities may function as intermediaries between the central government and local constituencies, thereby guaranteeing that regional issues are considered in diplomatic negotiations and international treaties. Such involvement not only cultivates a sense of belonging among heterogeneous communities but also enhances the policymaking process by integrating diverse viewpoints that could potentially be disregarded. This multifaceted approach can lead to more nuanced and effective foreign policy decisions, as regional parties often bring unique insights based on their geographic and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the incorporation of regional political entities into the discourse surrounding foreign policy has the potential to engender a more agile and adaptive governance framework that responds effectively to alterations in both domestic and international contexts. For instance, as Indian states increasingly engage in paradiplomatic efforts—establishing their own trade relations and cultural exchanges with foreign entities—they contribute to

shaping India's broader geopolitical strategy (Basu, 2016; Jenkins, 2003). This phenomenon underscores how localized initiatives not only reflect but also amplify national interests on the global stage, creating a feedback loop where regional aspirations align with foreign policy objectives. Consequently, the evolving role of these parties may necessitate a reevaluation of traditional power dynamics within Indian politics, prompting central authorities to consider regional voices as essential partners rather than mere stakeholders in the policymaking process. This shift towards recognizing regional significance may lead to more inclusive governance frameworks, fostering collaboration that enhances both local development and national cohesion. This evolving relationship between regional parties and foreign policy also highlights the potential for increased accountability within governance structures, as local leaders become more attuned to international developments that directly affect their constituencies. For example, states like Tamil Nadu have actively influenced India's diplomatic stance towards Sri Lanka, advocating for the rights of the Tamil minority in a way that resonates with both domestic sentiments and international human rights discourses.

Furthermore, this localized engagement can lead to greater scrutiny of national policies by regional actors, thereby fostering a political environment where foreign policy decisions are not solely top-down but rather reflect a coalition of interests that includes grassroots perspectives. As such, the interplay between regional aspirations and national strategies may ultimately redefine how India navigates its position on the global stage, potentially leading to innovative approaches that align with both state-level priorities and broader geopolitical objectives. This intricate relationship between regional parties and national foreign policy not only fosters localized engagement but also raises questions about the sustainability of such coalitional dynamics in the long term. As regional political entities progressively enhance their prominence, central governing bodies may encounter the necessity to maneuver through a multifaceted matrix of conflicting interests that has the potential to obfuscate decision-making frameworks, especially during periods of crisis or substantial geopolitical transformations. For instance, while Tamil Nadu's advocacy for Tamil rights has been pivotal in shaping India's approach to Sri Lanka, it simultaneously underscores the potential for conflicting regional agendas to challenge cohesive national strategies (Sridharan, 2012). States like West Bengal have leveraged their historical ties with Bangladesh to foster bilateral cooperation that aligns both local interests and national aspirations, thereby illustrating how subnational entities can play a pivotal role in shaping international relations (Basu, 2016). This evolving paradigm suggests that as coalitional dynamics become more pronounced, there may be a shift towards decentralized foreign policymaking, where regional

leaders not only contribute to but also negotiate directly on issues of cross-border significance. Moreover, as regional parties evolve into vital players within coalition governments, their ability to sway foreign policy decisions may lead to a more fragmented political landscape, where diverse regional voices can either enhance or hinder unified diplomatic efforts on critical issues like trade agreements and security alliances (Narang and Staniland, 2018). Consequently, the equilibrium of these diverse influences will be essential for India as it endeavors to uphold both its internal coherence and its position within the global context.

VIII. CASE STUDY OF TEESTA WATER DEAL AND INDO-SRI LANKA RELATION

The complex interaction between regional political dynamics and foreign policy in the Indian milieu creates a significant foundation for elucidating the nuances of international relations, especially within the South Asian framework. The analysis of the Teesta water agreement and its ramifications for Indo-Sri Lankan relations exemplifies the profound impact that domestic political factors can exert on foreign policy formulation. Within the paradigm of a multi-party political system, regional parties frequently possess considerable influence, shaping not only local administrative practices but also national policy frameworks. This research seeks to unravel the puzzle of how these regional party dynamics affect India's approach to critical foreign policy issues, using the Teesta water dispute as a focal point. By examining the historical context, stakeholder interests, and the geopolitical ramifications of the Teesta deal, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the interdependencies between domestic political landscapes and international diplomatic endeavors in India. Furthermore, the role of regional parties extends beyond mere influence on specific foreign policy decisions; it encapsulates a broader trend where domestic political pressures can lead to significant shifts in international relations. The discourse revolved around India's foreign policy, highlighting the impactful involvement of West Bengal's Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Merely a week prior to the diplomatic visit in 2011, Banerjee's abrupt public dissent regarding the agreement inflicted a considerable setback, notwithstanding her anticipated presence alongside Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during his official engagement in Bangladesh. Her political party, the Trinamool Congress (TMC), withdrew its representatives from the assembly, signaling a clear protest. Banerjee articulated that her administration had not been adequately consulted and asserted that the agreement could potentially have detrimental implications for the water resources within West Bengal. In response, Singh indicated that he had contacted National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar

Menon, who concurred with the initial endorsement of the agreement by the Indian state government but subsequently retracted his support. For instance, the Teesta water deal not only highlights the complexities arising from local stakeholder interests but also reflects how these dynamics can complicate bilateral relationships with neighboring countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. As seen in past instances, such as the Tamil Nadu government's advocacy for Tamil rights in Sri Lanka, regional parties have historically mobilized public sentiment to pressure central governments into adopting more interventionist stances (Blarel & Willigne, 2020). This interplay suggests that understanding regional party motivations—rooted in electoral considerations and cultural ties—is essential for comprehensively analyzing India's foreign policy trajectory, especially regarding sensitive issues like water sharing and ethnic solidarity (Wijekoon et al., 2023). Moreover, the implications of regional party influence are not limited to immediate foreign policy decisions; they also extend to long-term strategic considerations that shape India's role in South Asia. For instance, as regional parties push for policies reflecting local sentiments—such as advocating for Tamil rights or opposing certain water-sharing agreements—they inadvertently create a complex web of geopolitical dynamics that can attract external influences, particularly from countries like China, which seeks to expand its footprint in the region (Blarel & Willigne, 2020). This situation underscores the necessity for Indian policymakers to navigate these domestic pressures while maintaining a coherent and effective foreign policy strategy. Additionally, the evolving nature of coalition politics means that central governments may find themselves increasingly reliant on regional party support, compelling them to adopt more nuanced approaches that account for local interests without compromising broader national objectives (Blarel, 2019). Thus, understanding this interplay is vital not only for analyzing current diplomatic stances but also for anticipating future shifts in India's engagement with its neighbors. The relationship between regional party dynamics and foreign policy in India, particularly in the context of the Teesta water deal and Indo-Sri Lanka relations, can be viewed from a different perspective that emphasizes the primacy of national interests over local political considerations. While it is indeed correct to claim that regional political entities have the potential to influence foreign policy, the degree of their impact may not be as significant as is often contended. National security, economic stability, and diplomatic relations often take precedence over regional sentiments in the formulation of foreign policy. The Teesta water deal, while important, is ultimately a matter of national interest that transcends local political pressures. Central governments, irrespective of the existence of regional political factions, bear the responsibility of safeguarding the overarching interests of the nation, which may

occasionally necessitate the marginalization of regional issues in favor of international diplomatic considerations. The intricacies inherent in bilateral relations with nations such as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka frequently demand a degree of pragmatism that local political entities may not entirely comprehend, as their attention tends to be oriented towards more localized and immediate concerns. Moreover, the historical context presented in the case study does not necessarily dictate future actions. The evolving geopolitical landscape, particularly with the rise of global powers and shifting alliances, implies that Indian foreign policy must adapt to these new realities rather than being overly influenced by regional party dynamics. The argument that regional parties have historically mobilized public sentiment to pressure central governments overlooks the fact that national leaders often have the final say, guided by strategic assessments rather than populist demands. Additionally, while regional parties may advocate for local interests, this does not inherently complicate India's foreign relations. In many instances, a unified national stance can be achieved that aligns with both regional aspirations and national objectives. The ability of central governments to negotiate and maintain a coherent foreign policy indicates a level of political maturity that can withstand regional pressures. Furthermore, the assertion that regional party influence leads to external powers like China gaining a foothold in South Asia may be overstated. The dynamics of international relations are shaped by a multitude of factors, including economic ties, security partnerships, and strategic interests, which often outweigh the influence of regional parties. Consequently, although regional dynamics exert an influence, they ought not to eclipse the overarching strategic considerations that inform India's foreign policy. In conclusion, while regional party dynamics are a component of India's political landscape, they do not singularly dictate the course of foreign policy. A more nuanced understanding recognizes that national interests, security considerations, and the intricate nature of international relations ultimately prevail over localized political pressures, allowing for a more stable and coherent approach to India's engagement with its neighbors. Moreover, the intricate relationship between regional party dynamics and foreign policy in India can be further examined through the lens of economic interests that transcend local political considerations. As states engage in paradiplomatic initiatives—such as establishing trade ties with external entities—their leaders often align their agendas with national foreign policy objectives to enhance economic growth while still catering to regional aspirations (Blarel & Willigne, 2020). This evolving paradigm underscores a shift where regional parties increasingly recognize the importance of harmonizing their demands with broader national imperatives, thereby fostering a more collaborative approach to foreign relations. The implications are significant; not only does

this alignment help mitigate potential conflicts arising from localized pressures, but it also enables central governments to leverage regional strengths in negotiating international agreements. Thus, while regional influences remain pertinent, their integration into a cohesive national strategy may ultimately yield a more robust framework for India's engagement within the South Asian geopolitical landscape.

In conclusion, the interplay between regional party dynamics and foreign policy in India, particularly illustrated through the case study of the Teesta water deal and Indo-Sri Lanka relations, reveals a complex landscape where domestic political considerations significantly shape international diplomatic efforts. While regional parties undoubtedly influence the formulation of foreign policy, the overarching narrative suggests that national interests, security imperatives, and strategic assessments often take precedence over localized pressures. The evolving geopolitical context necessitates a pragmatic approach that allows central governments to navigate regional sentiments while safeguarding broader national objectives. This intricate relationship also highlights the potential for regional parties to align their aspirations with national priorities, fostering a collaborative environment that enhances India's foreign relations. Ultimately, a sophisticated comprehension of this dynamic is imperative for predicting forthcoming alterations in India's foreign policy, thereby guaranteeing that it retains its resilience and adaptability in the face of both domestic and international challenges. Moreover, the escalating importance of economic interdependence within South Asia further exacerbates the interplay between regional political dynamics and foreign policy. As states like India seek to enhance their trade ties with neighboring countries, the role of regional parties becomes even more critical in shaping these diplomatic engagements. For instance, the push for greater economic cooperation through initiatives such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) highlights how regional leaders can advocate for policies that align local interests with national objectives, thereby fostering a collaborative environment conducive to mutual growth (Blarel & Willigne, 2020). However, this also raises questions about the balance of power within federal structures; while regional parties may champion specific economic agendas, they must navigate the intricate web of national priorities and external pressures, particularly from larger powers like China, which could exploit any disunity among Indian states (Patnaik, 1980). Thus, an in-depth comprehension of these complex interactions is crucial not only for elucidating contemporary diplomatic strategies but also for forecasting prospective advancements within the framework of India's foreign relations. As the intricacies of regional party influence on foreign policy perpetually transform, it becomes essential to examine how these interactions not only dictate immediate diplomatic results but also inform

enduring strategic alignments throughout South Asia. The increasing engagement of Indian states in paradiplomatic efforts, particularly through economic initiatives and trade agreements, has created a landscape where local political agendas can either complement or conflict with national interests. For instance, as regional parties advocate for specific economic partnerships that resonate with their constituencies, they inadvertently alter the trajectory of India's foreign relations by compelling central governments to adapt their strategies accordingly. This phenomenon is evident in the historical context of Tamil Nadu's advocacy for Tamil rights in Sri Lanka, which underscores the potential for localized demands to reverberate across broader geopolitical considerations (Blarel & Willigne, 2020). Furthermore, the dynamic interaction between localized preferences and multilevel coalition configurations indicates that the capacity of central governing bodies to adeptly navigate these pressures will be pivotal in sustaining a unified foreign policy paradigm in the face of external challenges, particularly in light of China's increasing prominence in the region.

IX. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the dynamics of regional political entities are instrumental in shaping Indian foreign policy, thereby reflecting the heterogeneous interests and aspirations of various states within the federal framework. The interaction between regional political agendas and national foreign policy objectives illustrates the intricate nature of governance within a multi-tiered political system such as India. Regional parties frequently advocate for positions that resonate with the needs of their constituents, which can result in a more nuanced and localized approach to international relations. Furthermore, their influence possesses the capacity to either enhance or contest the central government's position, particularly in domains such as trade, security, and diplomatic relations. As India continues to traverse an increasingly interconnected global landscape, comprehending the ramifications of regional party dynamics will be imperative for policymakers. This complex relationship not only underscores the significance of regional representation in the formulation of foreign policy but also highlights the necessity for a cohesive national strategy that accommodates the diverse voices within the nation. Hence, the intersection of regional politics and foreign policy constitutes a critical area for ongoing scholarly inquiry and analysis, as it will substantially affect India's role on the global stage in the forthcoming years. Moreover, the case of the Indo-Bangladesh Teesta Water Deal serves as a salient example of how regional party dynamics can obfuscate negotiations that are vital to national interests. The opposition from the ruling party in West Bengal, motivated by local electoral considerations and sentiments surrounding water

sharing, has impeded what could have been a seminal agreement beneficial to both nations. This scenario exemplifies that while regional parties may augment representation in foreign policy deliberations, they can simultaneously engender significant obstacles when their agendas conflict with broader national strategies. Another case study highlighting the influence of Dravidian parties within Tamil Nadu's political landscape on India's foreign relations, particularly concerning Sri Lanka, is noteworthy. The Dravidian parties have historically adopted assertive positions on issues pertaining to the Tamil populace in Sri Lanka, frequently resulting in escalated tensions between the two nations. Their vigorous advocacy for Tamil rights has shaped public sentiment and influenced governmental policy, thereby demonstrating how regional parties can drive national discourse while concurrently complicating diplomatic endeavors.

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