



FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY TO CONTEMPORARY PERIODS: A STUDY OF INDIA-INDONESIA RELATIONSHIP

Ankita Chakraborty

Darmasiswa Student of UNNES (2016-2017)

Phd Research Scholar in Vidyasagar University, India

Info Artikel

Sejarah artikel:

Diterima
September 2017
Disetujui
Desember 2017
Dipublikasikan
Januari 2018

Keywords: Non Alignment, Look East Policy, Cold War, Hinduism, Buddhism, Act East Policy

Kata kunci:

Non Alignment, Kebangkitan Bangsa Timur, Perang Dingin, Hinduisme, Buddhisme, Tindakan Kebijakan Timur

ABSTRACT

The relation between India and Indonesia is not new and it had dated back to the ancient period which is quite evident from the architectural remnants in Indonesia. The Indian traders had sailed through the South East Asian Nations and also been said to be spread of Sanskrit language in Indonesia. Not only that both Hinduism and Buddhism had been said to be spread from India to Indonesia. India had always shared a cordial relation with Indonesia, from the ancient period till the present days. Both had undergone a similar phase of colonial rule and India had always supported Indonesia in her freedom struggle also during the Cold War era, both have followed the policy of Non Alignment of not joining any of the power blocs. The relation had grown since the end of the Cold War as India had started its' Look East Policy (LEP) in 90's to enhance its ties with its South East Asian neighbors. India has several ties and cooperation with Indonesia including economic, culture, defense, science and technology, environment etc. The ties have also enhanced during the recent years after India have adopted its Act East Policy (AEP). This policy have aim to foster growth through more cooperation and involvement in each other growth and development.

ABSTRAK

Hubungan antara India dan Indonesia bukanlah hal baru dan telah kembali ke periode kuno yang cukup nyata dari sisa-sisa arsitektur di Indonesia. Pedagang India telah berlayar melewati negara-negara Asia Tenggara dan juga dikatakan menyebarkan bahasa Sanskerta di Indonesia. Tidak hanya agama Hindu dan Budha yang telah disebarkan dari India ke Indonesia. India selalu berbagi hubungan baik dengan Indonesia, dari periode kuno sampai sekarang. Keduanya telah mengalami perubahan yang sama dengan pemerintahan kolonial dan India selalu mendukung Indonesia dalam perjuangan kebebasannya selama era Perang Dingin, juga telah mengikuti kebijakan Non Alignment untuk tidak bergabung dengan blok kekuasaan manapun. Hubungan tersebut telah berkembang sejak berakhirnya Perang Dingin karena India telah memulai Look East Policy (LEP) atau Kebangkitan Bangsa Timur di tahun 90-an untuk meningkatkan hubungannya dengan negara-negara Asia Tenggara. India memiliki beberapa ikatan dan kerja sama dengan Indonesia termasuk ekonomi, budaya, pertahanan, sains dan teknologi, lingkungan dan lain-lain. Hubungan tersebut juga meningkat dalam beberapa tahun terakhir setelah India menerapkan Act East Policy (AEP) atau Kebijakan Pergerakan Timur. Kebijakan ini bertujuan untuk mendorong pertumbuhan melalui kerja sama dan keterlibatan dalam pertumbuhan dan perkembangan masing-masing.

BACKGROUND

The relation between India and Indonesia is said to be started from the pages of history, when both had economic or trade relation with each other, which have also said to be influenced the art and architecture, religion and practices in Indonesia. Started from the ancient age the relation has said to be continued in the modern days especially in the days of colonial rule and also during the Cold War period and post Cold War years till the recent days when the South East Asia had been priority to the foreign policy of India. The main aim of the article is to discuss the ties that has bind India and Indonesia from the early ages till contemporary period.

There are several works that had done in past dealing with the relationship between India and Indonesia, among the major works on bilateral relation.

Arora (1981) discussed various issues between India and Indonesia, like the Belgrade Conference, Afro Asian Conferences, China's role and Pakistan's role in the development of India and Indonesia relationship. The book provides a detailed discussion of political relationship between India and Indonesia. But the book deals basically with the issues before 1980's and after that there is no detailed work had been provided by any scholars.

Jha and Kuswadi (2015) in the edited book which an outcome of seminal paper presentation with the contribution of several scholars. It has discussion of Economic and trade relations, Science and technology, cultural ties in the contemporary years. The book serves as an important source of India-Indonesia relationship in the post-Cold War and in the modern period.

Jha Kuswadi (2016) in the edited book, which is also an outcome of seminar presentation, had discussed India and Indonesia ties starting from the history to the contemporary periods. It has also discussed cultural legacy and ties in contemporary periods.

The method use to find the relation between India and Indonesia, especially for this article, mainly by collection of data from secondary sources which includes: -Several books related to India and Indonesia or India's relation to South East Asia, Annual Reports of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Government of India. Several journals and policy briefcovering the bilateral relations between India and Southeast Asia. Newspapers article from Jakarta Post (Indonesia), The Hindu (India) and other print media of both the countries. The social media pages of the India and Indonesian Embassies. Reports on track II diplomacy from Embassies of Indonesia located in India and also by various Internet sources.

EARLY TIES AND LEGACIES

India and India relationship is not new we have our ties since from our early past. There are some interesting and unknown historical facts of culture and cultural derivation that connects India and Indonesiayou back in history in ancient era where these cultural exchanges has started and many Indonesian culture derived from India. The similar cultural linkages that India and Indonesia had shared are quite evident from the art and architecture remnants in Indonesia. The ties have been dated back to the times when the epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata were written, as the name Yawadwipa (modern Java) found mentioned in the Ramayana, where Sugriva,

the chief of Rama's army, had dispatched his men to Yavadwipa, in search of Sita (Saharan, 2015, p.69). The ancient Indians had known to spread Hinduism and Buddhism and many other aspect of Indian culture including Sanskrit and Brahmi script to Indonesia. The name Indonesia had been derived from the Latin words *Indus*, meaning India, and the Greek *nesos*, meaning Island (Saharan, 2015. P.69). The Sanskrit inscriptions also found at Batu Tulis near Bogor, Joko Dolog in Surabaya, and in an Iron Pillar at Sanur in Bali.

Students from Indonesia used to study in Nalanda University of India during Sriwijaya era also in the Deva Pala inscription in the Nalanda copper plate stated that in the 21st day in the month of Kartika in the 39th year during the rule of Deva Pala in India, on the request of Balaputradewa; the King of Swarnadvipa, Deva Pala had presented five villages for the maintenance and sustenance of venerated Bhikshus and Scholars and for the upkeep of a monastery at Nalanda (The Jakarta Post, 2015).

The historical relations between the two countries had become stronger when Indian's first Nobel Laureate in Literature Rabindranath Tagore had visited Java and Bali in 1927 to discover the Indian culture in Southeast Asia and also to promote Asian cultural identity. He had also visited Belawan, Batavia, Surabaya, Solo, Yogyakarta, Bali and Bandung mainly to connect with the intellect and culture of the region and to mobilize support for his world university 'Vishwa Bharati'. Tagore at that time had planted a sapling at the Borobudur Temple and he had written a poem "To Jawa", in Borobudur temple by expressing his love for the country. His bust was now situated at the premises of Borobudur temple, which was unveiled in 2012.

The Kalinga-Bali Yatra festival perhaps can be consider as one the best example of revival of our ancient ties with Indonesia, it is one of the age old practice followed by the people of the Indian state of Odisha. It is also known as Boita Bandana Utsav (or Boat Worshipping Festival i.e. ceremonial sending forth of boats to distant shores), the event is performed in every household of Odisha, in memory of those Sadhabapuas (Odia traders) who had commenced their maritime voyage to Bali, Java & Sumatra for trade and cultural expansion on the auspicious day of Kartika Purnima, the full-moon day of the month Kartika (October-November) as per as the Hindu calendar (Das, 2015). Biju Patnaik, the former chief minister of Odisha, had re-inaugurated the Kalinga Bali Yatra in 1992. The journey had began on 10 November 1992, in which INS V-Samudra had covered a distance of 5810 nautical miles in just over 17 weeks (Mohapatra, 2007, p.22), the journey had retraced the trade route, that ancient mariners of Kalinga used to follow, the routes includes Gopalpur- Vizag- Madras- Campbel Bay-Pedang- Jakarta-Surabaya and had reached Bali on 31st January, 1993. It was followed by espousal ceremonial reception at Benoa Harbour also a seminar on Indo India cultural ties; Exhibition of Classical Arts; Handicrafts and Textile of Orissa and Presentation of Odissi, Chau and Sambalpuri dance was organized (New Straits Time, 1993).

COLONIAL RULE AND INDIA INDONESIA RELATION

India and Indonesia had also shared a cordial relation during the colonial and post independence period. India's freedom movement had inspired Indonesia's freedom fighters in their fight against the Dutch colonial rule. India had also played a pivotal role in

their freedom struggle. Not only that, India had also supported Indonesia's 'Proclamation of Independence' in 1945. The All India Radio had functioned as the official 'freedom radio' of the Indonesian Republic in the first years of its existence (The Hindu, 2008). The Indian leader who had contributed largely to Indonesia's nationalist movement by his heroic acts was Biju Patnaik. After the fall of Japan in the Second World War, when the Dutch had again tried to regain control over the country, had launched a large scale attack on 21 July 1947, Sukarno had immediately ordered Sutan Sjahrir, the Prime Minister, to leave the country in order to create international public opinion against the Dutch but Sjahrir could not make it as the Dutch had absolute control over Indonesian sea and air routes. On 22 July 1947, Biju Patnaik, landed on a temporary airstrip in Jakarta, flew back to Delhi with Indonesian leaders Vice President Mohammad Hatta and Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir. Sukarno was the chief guest of first Republic Day Parade in India in India, followed by the visit of Nehru to Indonesia on June 1950. The friendship treaty of India and Indonesia in 1951 was first such treaty of Indonesia with a foreign country, which desired to consolidate the bonds of peace and friendship, and to develop peaceful and friendly relations between them.

On 17th August 1955, Indonesian government had conferred the highest honor Bintang Republik Indonesia Adipurna, first class star of the republic of Indonesia, to Jawaharlal Nehru. Indonesia had honored Nehru's support to Indonesia's independence, which had strengthened the Indonesian national struggle to successfully prevent attempts by the Dutch Government to regain control over Indonesia and also for his full moral and diplomatic support to newly born Republic of Indonesia. Indonesia had also conferred

Bintang Jasa Utama, First class star of services to the former chief Minister of Orissa (Odisha) Shri Biju Patnaik, for his heroic role during the struggle for Independence of Indonesia. He was also awarded with the epithet 'Bhoomi Putra', along with the highest Indonesian award and a rare distinction ever granted to a foreigner. Indonesia had also conferred Bintang Jasa Utama, to veteran Indian Freedom fighter and a close associate of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Shri Muhammad Yunus, who was appointed to the post of first Indian Representative to Indonesia. He became vital link of communications between President Sukarno, vice-President Mohammad Hatta and Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in supporting Indonesian national struggle to defend its independence during a very sensitive and crucial period of Indonesia. The award was also conferred to Shri P. R. S. Mani, a war journalist, who had been actively covered and broadcast news of Indonesian struggle against the Dutch military forces to the international community. Later, he was appointed to be Indian Representative to Indonesia as a successor to Shri Muhammad Yunus.

COLD WAR PERIOD

Also during the Cold War period both India and Indonesia had come with the idea of Non Aligned Movement (NAM) to not to join any superpower. NAM was adopted in the backdrop of Cold War Era, against the ideological divide of the two power blocks of United States and Former Soviet Union. The newly independent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America sought to remain neutral from the ideologies of the post war superpower and thus the concept of the Non Alignment came in to being. The idea of 'Non Alignment' (the actual term was coined by VK Krishna Menon in his speech at United

Nations) was meant not to join the any of the power blocs or their ideology but to maintain a neutral path or middle path, formed in 1961 at Belgrade. The founding fathers of NAM were India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru; Indonesia's first president, Sukarno; Egypt's second President, Gamal Abdel Nasser; Ghana's first President Kwame Nkrumah; and Yugoslavia's President, Iosip Broz Tito.

Areas of discontentment between India and Indonesia

But the sugar coated relationship was short-lived between India and Indonesia, as there were areas of discontentment between India and Indonesia during this period. There were several issues that had led discontentment between India and Indonesia were

- **Asian Games issue held in Jakarta in 1962-** The relation between India and Indonesia had deteriorated in the Asian Games that had been held in Jakarta in 1962, where Indonesia had expelled the participation of Taiwan and Israel, by not approving the visa of the athlete to enter the country. GD Sondhi, the then senior Vice President of the Asian Games had criticized the Indonesian government and supported the participation of Israel and Taiwan (Suryanarayan, 1999, p. 99). The incidence had led to the attack of about 20,000 angry Indonesians, that led by 100 uniformed but unarmed soldiers attack the Indian Embassy in Jakarta, which was directed against GD Sondhi with the slogan "Expel Sondhi" along with the tampering and hauled down of Indian flag for his criticism of non inclusion of Formosa and Israel
- **On the formation of Malaya-** The formation of Malay Federation was opposed by both

the Philippines and Indonesia, as each had territorial claims on East Malaysia (Nanda, 2003, p.207). Indonesia was hostile to the emergence of Malay Federation and had claimed territories like Borneo which was part of Malay (Nanda, 2003, p.207). From 1963 to 1966, Indonesia had launched *Konfrontasi*, a low intensity military campaign to crush Malaysia (Chivee, 2015, p.419). On the other hand India had always supported the concept of Federation of Malaya and supported Malay in its decolonization process. In 1964, India had successfully rallied to support Malaysian candidate for one of the Non Permanent seats in the Security Council; Malaysia's election had angered Sukarno who had termed UN as neo colonist organization and had decided to withdraw from its next election (Suryanarayan, 1999, p.100).

- **Indo Pak War of 1965-** The differing in attitude between India and Indonesia was very much prominent during 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, when Indonesia had provided assistance to Pakistan, in response to India's support for Malay independence in the various international forums and advocating a security role in for great Britain in the region (Suryanarayana, 1999, p.102).
- **Kampuchea recognition issue-** The conflict which had led to overthrow of Pol Pot regime and installation of new government under Heng Samrin supported by Vietnam and supported by Soviet Union, received severe between ASEAN countries including Indonesia and India, when Indian Government under the leadership of Indira Gandhi had announced in July 7, 1980 to recognise the new government in Phnom Penh led by Heng Samrin; to which

the ASEAN countries had reacted strongly (Arora, 1981, p.327).

These are the few incidents where there were discontentment between India and Indonesia, but this discontentment was proved to be short lived and India and Indonesia had revisited their ties and continued their diplomatic relations in the later period.

POST COLD WAR ERA

The ties had also continued to grow in the post Cold War era especially with the India's adoption of Look East Policy (LEP) to foster its ties with the South East Asian Neighbors. This had led to number of treaties signed between them and also high level exchanges between both the countries, especially during the post Suharto regime, the then President of Indonesia Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, who is popularly known as Gus Das had expressed his desire to foster closer relation with India, during his visit to India as part of his foreign tour in February 2000. Wahid use to view India as an industrial "giant" besides being a leader in the frontier area of Information Technology in the emerging New Global Economy, so he had wanted to have a multi faceted relation with India (The Hindu, 2000). The then Indian Prime Minister, Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee had visited Indonesia from January 10-14 in the year 2001, which was the first visit of any Indian Prime Minister to Indonesia in 14 years (The Hindu, 2001). The then Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri had made her state visit to India from 1-5 April 2002 accompanied by her husband, Mr. Taufiq Kiemas, and her daughter, Ms. Puan Maharani (MEA Report, 2002). In order to expand bilateral relation and cooperation, the then President of India Smt Pratibha Devisingh Patel had paid a state visit to Indonesia on from 28 November to 1

December, 2008, she had visited Taman Ayun Temple in Bali on November 29, 2008 where she had planted a Mangos teen tree that symbolizes peace and tranquility.

Nevertheless this period had also witnessed a number of treaties that had signed between India and Indonesia which includes Special Economic Zone cooperation, development of alternative energy sources, the conclusion of a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) in Criminal Matters and Extradition Treaty, cooperation in health and pharmaceuticals, oil and gas, and mining, biotechnology and women's empowerment, it had also included the discussion to strengthen cooperation on Science and Technology, and cooperation in Information Technology, nuclear technology, biotechnology, Tele-education, Tele-health, and strengthening of cooperation in space technology.

The former Indonesian President Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono had paid a state visit to India on 24-26 January 2011, as a Republic Day guest. India and Indonesia had also celebrated their six decades of establishment of diplomatic relations in that year. During the presidential visits a wide ranges of bilateral agreements and MoUs were signed covering the area of political, security, economic, science and technology, media, education and cultural spheres. The 16 Inter-Governmental Agreements were signed which included an Extradition Treaty, Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, an MoU on Exchange of Financial Intelligence related to Money Laundering and Financing Terrorism, an MoU on Establishing a Biennial Trade Ministers' Forum, an Air Services Agreement, an MoU on Cooperation in Oil and Gas, an MoU on Cooperation in Urea Manufacturing, an MoU on Cooperation in the field of Micro, Small and Medium

Enterprises, an MoU on Cooperation between the BATAM Free Trade Zone and SEEPZ, and MoU on Cooperation in Marine and Fisheries, an MoU in Weather and Climate Services, an MoU on Science and Technology Cooperation, a Program of Cooperation in Science and Technology, an MoU on Cooperation between the Press Councils of the two countries, an MoU on Cooperation in the field of Education and a Cultural Exchange Program were also signed.

During the visit of India's then Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee in Indonesia in 2001, an Agreement on Cultural Exchange Program was signed for the year 2001-2003, "Under which both sides had signed agreement and encourage translation of classical and modern literatures, exchange of one shadow puppet expert, archives, exchange reproduction of arts, facilitate exchange of shadow puppets, audio-video recording, photographs, slides, recorded music and publications on performing arts also in exchanging experts in the field of archaeology, museology, conservation, restoration and history to organize exhibitions, exchange of books, film weeks/festivals".

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

India and Indonesia have also shares this unique relation even today. It can be said that the relation have improved during the recent years due to India's focus on Act East Policy (AEP) where South East Asia including Indonesia had been a priority. Indian government have following revival of ties especially with its three C's that is Culture, Commerce and Connectivity which would provide a deeper engagement of India with Indonesia.

The Indonesians' have undertaken initiatives in our Make in India campaign,

Digital India, Swacch Bharat campaign, International Yoga day and Skill Development Program, Make in India Program, also to commemorate the International Day of Yoga, Indian embassy in Indonesia, had released a special publication, in a gleaming ceremony of celebrities from both India and Indonesia, also a comic book focusing on the India-Indonesia historic relationship, which shows the fondness of Indonesians' towards India was published. The book "Travels through time (In Indonesia "Perjalanan Menelusuri Sejarah: Cerita Indonesia Dan India") focus on India-Indonesia relationship through different phrases of history through their historical, social and cultural link was made into being. The ceremony was attended by Indonesian celebrities like actor Nicholas Sapurta, Agus Riingo, Anjasmara, Ikat Fashion designer Didiet Maulana, novelist screenplay writer Asma Nadia, and celebrity chef Farah Quinn, film director Nia Dinata and Indian celebrities included cast of popular television series Mahabharata. The book would get distributed too libraries, schools, universities, to influence young minds about the age old relationship between India and Indonesia (Jakarta Press Release, 2015) Indonesia was not only among the first country, to support and co sponsor India's resolution in U.N General Assembly to establish the June 21st as International Day of Yoga, but also enthusiastically celebrated the first ever International Day of Yoga in the four cities of Jakarta, Bali, Medan and Surabaya witness about more than 7000 elated participants of all age groups along with celebrities across Indonesian cities (Nagpur Today, 2015).

The Festival of India in Indonesia is the area of exploring of more opportunities in the cultural domain of India in Indonesia and

of expanding India's Soft Power diplomacy in Indonesia. Recently in year 2015, the Indonesian celebrates the bilateral relationship with India by "Sahabat India" or the "Festival of India in Indonesia" which was launched by India on her 66th Republic Day to celebrate the age old relationship between the two nations. The term "Sahabat" stands for 'trustful, loyal and true friend'. The festival was comprised of varieties of cultural programme that includes classical and folk music and dance, cinema, food and fashion, education and literary fairs, business and trade delegations, art and artisans, paintings and sculptures had organized in Indonesia. (MEA Report, 2015)

CONCLUSION

It is no doubt that Indonesia as the biggest Nation in the South East Asian Nations has been priority for India, especially in recent years due to India's adoption of Act East Policy. It has seen that Indonesia have shares a quite cordial relation, and their relation is especially of cooperation in various field rather than discontentment. Both India and Indonesia can grow in the revival of our ancient ties as it is also one of the agenda of India's Act East Policy, to revive our relation with our ancient cultural ties. It has observed that India and Indonesia have shared a similar process of Nation buildings, fight against colonial ruler and formation of a new Nation state. Also it is note that apart from few discontentments in the Cold War years both countries have never faced any severe issues of discontentment rather there are more areas of cooperation in the field of Science and Technology, Research and development, Environment, fight against radicalism. The cultural linkages embrace our relations. Also the visa exemption on the part of Indonesia for Indian tourist is a welcoming

effort to foster our ties and growth of Indian tourist to India. Act East Policy of India has opened a new welcoming door to Indonesia to invest in India and take part in our rebuilding process. The bilateral relation between India and Indonesia hope to bring prospers between India and Indonesia.

References

- Arora, BD (1981). Indian Indonesian Relation (1961-1980). Asian Education Services: New Delhi.
- Baruah, Amit (2001). A boost to relations with Indonesia. The Hindu.
- Cheng-Chivee, Kuik (2015) "Malaysia- China Relations: Three enduring themes". In Weiss(ed), Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Malaysia. Routledge Taylor and Francis: Oxon.
- Das, Kumar, Sameer (2014, 7 November). Bali Yatra Festival :Odisha Connecting Indonesia. orissadiary.com.
- Indian Embassy releases Comic Book on India Indonesia Relations on International Day of Yoga (2015, 21 June). Embassy of India: Jakarta.
- International Day of Yoga held in Bali (Indonesia). (2015, 12 April). Nagpur Today.
- Jha and Kuswadi (2015). India-Indonesia : Bilateral Ties An Introspection. SuryodayaBooks :New Delhi.
- Jha and Kuswadi (2016). India Indonesia Legacy of Intimate Encounters. D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd: New Delhi.

- Kalinga Bali Yatra 1992-1993. A tryst with history on the high seas. (1993, 30 January). *New Straits Time*.
- Mohapatra, Prabhukalyan (2007, November). Baliyatra : Reminiscence of Orissa's Maritime Glory. *Orissa Review*.
- New issues, old ties mark Pratibha's visit to Indonesia, Vietnam. (2008, 24 November). *The Hindu*.
- 'Sahabat India' launch on Republic Day. (2015, 26 January). *The Jakarta Post*.
- Saharan, Vikas, "India-Indonesia Cooperation Challenges and Way Ahead", in Jha and Kuswadi(ed) (2015), India- Indonesia bilateral ties An Introspection, Suryodaya Books. New Delhi.
- Suryanarayan, V (1999). "Attitudes of Malaysia and Indonesia Towards Indo Pakistani conflict, 1965 National Interest or Islamic Solidarity?" In Grover and Arora (ed), World Community and Indo-Pak Relations, Deep and Deep Publications: New Delhi.
- Suryanarayana, PS. (2000, 27 May) Wahid sees big global role for India. *The Hindu*, Jakarta.
- MEA Reports of various years
- Web sources:
archives.chicagotribune.com
breakingnewsonline.in
nagpurtoday.in
www.esamskriti.com
mea.gov.in
www.ndtv.com
<https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au>
pratibhapatil.nic.in
pib.nic.in