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CHAPTER

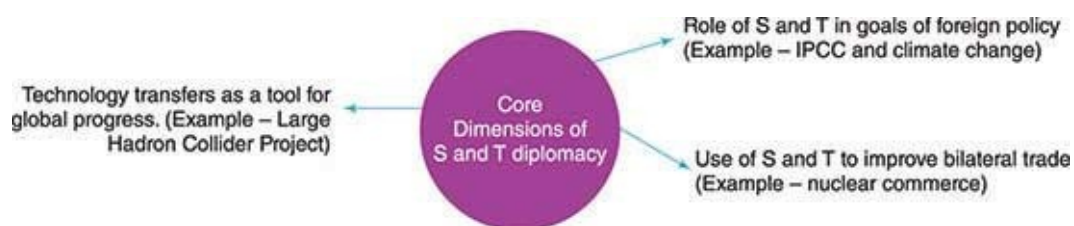# *India and Science and Technology Diplomacy*

After reading the chapter, the reader will be able to develop an analytical understanding on the following:

➤ S and T in diplomacy
➤ Core dimensions involved
➤ Social media and Indian public diplomacy
➤ Libya, India and Twitter
➤ Maldivies virtual embassy
➤ Indian public diplomacy

The origin of science and technology (S&T) diplomacy dates back to the Cold War. It was during the Cold War that the USA and the USSR leverage technology to empower their military and use it to achieve foreign policy goals. Moreover, with the nuclear arms race, the need to ensure non-proliferation of nuclear weapons can be seen through various denial regimes that emerged to supplement the idea of S&T diplomacy. The post-Cold War period has seen the rise of developments in IT that has again enhanced the need of technology-for-growth by nations. As IT advancements supplements the drive of globalisation, there will also be increased need of cyber space protection. With the digitisation of data by states, a majority of economic processes are becoming IT controlled, and cyber war is now a new paradigm of war. This is the reason why, over a period of time, IR, which began as a study of war and diplomacy, has gradually incorporated S and T as a tool of diplomacy.

Role of S and T in goals of foreign policy (Example – IPCC and climate change)

Technology transfers as a tool for global progress. (Example – Large Hadron Collider Project)

Core Dimensions of S and T diplomacy

Use of S and T to improve bilateral trade (Example – nuclear commerce)

Soft Power and Diplomacy

In 2012, as the Arab Spring unfolded in Egypt and mass mobilisation was witnessed at the Tahrir Square, the Indian Embassy decided to celebrate Gandhi's anniversary by using social media. The Embassy launched a poster contest on the following theme: "Did you see the Gandhian spirit at Tahrir Square?" This way, using the social media, Indian diplomacy successfully integrated Gandhi with the Arab Spring and

saluted the spirit of the participants at Tahrir Square.

India has taken the concept and application of S&T diplomacy in the post-Cold War period by leveraging IT. It uses aggressive public diplomacy to establish connect with various actors. Social media is a core strategy used by India in its S&T diplomacy.

The Department of Public Diplomacy of MEA also successfully used Twitter to evacuate Indians from Libya in 2011, which proved to be a great success. Twitter was used for evacuation, planning and information sharing. Thus, India has shown how it can use S&T as a tool for public diplomacy. Due to advancements in communication, diplomacy has evolved dramatically in the 21st century. In 2007, we saw Maldives unveiling the world's first virtual embassy. This advancement clearly proves that the diplomacy of the future needs to take IT very seriously. The concept that has emerged in India in public diplomacy is that the state should use its foreign policy tools to directly connect within its target audience. The aim is use of innovative mechanisms to reach multiple actors. For example, social media is used to connect to the young population. Public diplomacy reflects a growing connect of diplomacy to the private sector, NGOs, and so on. This ensures two-way communication and interaction. Public diplomacy has emerged as a key tool to project India's positive attributes at the right time and right place and serves our national interests well.