

Significance of Non-Alignment Movement – Today and Tomorrow

---Dr.Ila

NAM flourished during cold war, when the world was divided in two mutual competing groups. All the countries of world were joining either group. This led 3rd world countries in a problem of maintaining their new found freedom. They were in search of some other alternative. NAM provided them with the required alternative.

India was the first country to introduce non aligned policy as the basic principle of its foreign policy. Non alignment is actually symbolic of paving way for peace, independent decision on international issues, developing the idea of world brotherhood and enhancing the policy of *laissez faire* as well as not joining either side.

Three world leaders played a prominent role in transforming non alignment to NAM. They are J B Tito (Yugoslavia), J L Nehru (India) , G A Nasser (Egypt). They formed the 5 base principles of this movement. This included --- avoiding all kinds of war and running the foreign policy keeping national interests in mind , a justified manner.

The 1st Nam summit was held in Belgrade, 1961 and was attended by 22 countries. Total 28 like-policies countries were invited out of which 25 sent their representatives and the rest sent their examining bodies.

Later on its membership went on increasing and along with this increased the disputes on various issues. The most common issue was giving priority to various aspects of movement. On one hand it had a universally accepted front and on the other hand it had some individual or regional fronts too, which could be recognized working as separate units. This means that all the member countries can be taken to be working on two levels --- world level, individual level

The extent of its need, importance and fame of this movement can be approximated from the increase in its membership from 28 in 1961, Belgrade session to 131 in 2006, Havana session. Its most important achievements include postponing of wars, reducing their intensity and in some cases disputes were completely solved. NAM can be said to have played a vital role in maintaining world peace in this nuclear age. This brought cold war to ceasefire. It beefed up the role of UNO in which all countries have equal representation. Non aligned countries have been successful in establishing a foundation of economic cooperation amongst underdeveloped countries. South--South dialogue has been summoned from the non aligned countries' front.

Critics have their say that it is theoretically a best-fit policy but on practical front it has always failed. Despite of all criticism, this movement has become more and more active and practical. Although it has got no permanent headquarter but some formal institutions have sprung up. They are of two types ---- summit of foreign ministers of non aligned countries, peak summits.

The first kind involves foreign ministers of various countries coming together to form a work list for peak summit and hold dialogues on international issues.

This movement is gradually transforming into an economic movement from apolitical movement. This involves luring the attention towards burning topics such as international economic order, environmental issues.

Now the question arises what is its significance in 21st century

Its existence was being questioned when bipolar system was replaced by multipolar system. For instance Condoleezza Rice, America's foreign Minister said that NAM had its significance during cold war but it has lost its significance in today's context. But it is not true as many of the non aligned countries are poor

or are economically underdeveloped and they are being exploited by developed countries and MNCs. In this situation it is important that in order to protect the interests, a forceful dialogue be brought about between developed and underdeveloped countries. It is also important that mutual cooperation among undeveloped countries be enhanced. For these causes non alignment provides a front. NAM is transforming to economic movement from political movement. Non aligned countries are demanding New International Economic Order (NIEO).

It is said that 21st century would involve economic war. Groups of economically developed countries would compete among themselves posing a threat to the interests of undeveloped countries.

In order to control the situation, protest the monopoly of America in monoaxial world, induce forceful dialogue between developed and undeveloped countries and protest neo colonial exploitation, maintain North-South dialogue, South-South dialogue and bring about NIEO , NAM and G-77 will have to work together.

In today's context, issues of world importance are environmental pollution, economic crises etc. NAM has tried to concentrate on environmental pollution in Lusaka and Algiers summits by proposing NIEO. This makes it obvious that NAM is working towards establishing peaceful, socialist world system and then brightening the future of undeveloped countries. At the summit in Bali, Indonesia (14-15 May, 1992) they posed doubts that end of East-West collision would give rise to North-South collision. Cold war may revive in the form of North –South collision. Thus in the new international political context, significance of NAM has been enhanced.

Actually Nam is the 2nd largest stage after UNO. From this viewpoint NAM could play a significant role in world politics.

Only NAM could save world community from monopoly of America, otherwise, American influence would be established over whole world.

Today it has become more important to provide UNO with more democratic skeleton. NAM can work this out. It can also become the face of world in field of disarmament and this would also make sure that superpowers do not make the third world countries a hub of destructive weapons.

CONCLUSION:-

NAM originated during cold war to protect the interests of the newly independent countries. Its 1st session was held in Belgrade, 1961. Before this session, in 1955, about 30 countries' representatives gathered in the city of Bandung including J L Nehru and discussed issues of polarized world affecting the continents. Nehru considered that Bandung became the capital of Asia and Africa for the time being. This session increased the diplomatic value of third world countries.

Members of Nam had disputes on some issues due to gap in the level of technological and economical development. The major difference was between Asian and African countries as the Asian countries rose and African countries went down. Also, the disputes between India and Pakistan questioned the very basic principle of NAM--- peaceful coexistence. In the post cold war period NAM was considered as sleeping beauty. In today's world, NAM has got a great task of questioning the monopoly of America in UNO and world. Also, NAM has made significant discussions on several issues of world importance.

In order to maintain its significance in coming time, it will have to make strict reforms that must be carried out by the individual countries.

Sources of Information:-

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