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India and West Asia: From Civilizational Links to Strategic Partnerships

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ABSTRACT

India's engagement with West Asia reflects both civilizational continuity and modern strategic depth. The objective of this review paper is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the historical, cultural, economic, political, and strategic dimensions of India's engagement with West Asia. By tracing civilizational continuity through shared heritage, diaspora connections, and educational exchanges, the paper highlights how ancient ties have evolved into modern partnerships. It seeks to examine India's balanced diplomacy in navigating regional rivalries, its dependence on Gulf energy, and the role of multilateral organizations in shaping cooperation. At the same time, the study identifies challenges such as regional instability and diaspora security, while exploring opportunities in renewable energy, digital innovation, and strategic connectivity projects. Ultimately, the paper aims to position India as a vital bridge between East and West, offering policy recommendations to strengthen ties and ensure that India's engagement with West Asia remains resilient, forward looking, and mutually beneficial.



Keywords: India, West Asia, civilizational continuity, diplomacy, diaspora, energy security, strategic connectivity, renewable energy, digital economy



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INTRODUCTION

The history of West Asia and India spans a long engagement, dating back to ancient maritime trade between the Indus Valley and Mesopotamia, in which the region exchanged textiles, spices, and precious stones (Raza, 2023). These civilizational ties were reinforced during the medieval period with the exchange of cultures and religions. In particular, with the spread of Islam and the evolution of Indo-Persian societies. These historical relations laid the foundation for long-term socio-cultural ties that continue to define India's relations with the region. Energy security, diaspora welfare and strategic connectivity have made the West Asian region the centre of focus in the Indian foreign policy in the modern era. Over 60 per cent of the crude oil consumed in India is sourced in the region; therefore, the country cannot afford to be without the region to supply its energy (Bhatt, 2011). In addition, expatriates of Indian origin in the Gulf significantly influence the Indian economy through remittances and serve as transmitters of culture, comprising over 8.5 million (Census of India, 2011). India has been walking the fine line on the Palestinian issue diplomatically, yet, in the process, working towards improved relations with Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. This is a functional re-orientation of India, no longer ideologically non-aligned but now concentrating on strategic alliances based on economic development, defence relations, and regional security (Raza, 2023). The relevance of India-West Asia relations in the current context is also shaped by the evolving geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific and the Red Sea, where India is seeking to align its maritime policy with the security structures of West Asian states. The intention behind such integration is to act as a mediator between Asia and the Middle East, as well as to re-establish India's bilateralism and multilateral diplomacy in the international arena. Thus, Indian involvement in West Asia is both historical and transactional. Such relationships have already become formal collaborations, which are discussed in the subsequent sections,

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considering the economic, political, and cultural dimensions and identifying the obstacles and prospects of further collaboration.

Importance of the region: geography, trade routes, energy security, and diaspora.

West Asia is of great importance due to its geographical location, trade routes, energy resources, and the large Indian diaspora there. The area is at the intersection of Asia, Africa, and Europe, and the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el Mandeb, and the Suez Canal are under its control. West Asia is a natural extension of the Indian neighbourhood, since these routes are a significant component of Indian international trade and energy imports. Historically, the Indian, Mesopotamian and Gulf centres were connected to the Arabian Sea by sea, and this is still evident today through existing shipping and connectivity projects. India cannot risk losing West Asia in terms of energy security. In 2025, India will still need to import liquefied natural gas from Qatar, but it will be importing about 60 per cent of its crude oil needs by then, from countries including Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the United Arab Emirates ([International Energy Agency, 2025](#)). Any turmoil in the area directly impacts domestic energy prices and inflation in India, making the strategic vulnerability of such dependence very clear. The Indian diaspora cannot be underestimated either, as 8.5 million or more Indians live and work in the Gulf countries. They contribute significantly to India's foreign exchange reserves and domestic income, and their existence strengthens cultural and social ties between India and West Asia ([World Bank, 2025](#)). This has led to this diaspora being seen as a routine aspect of India's foreign policy, especially during a crisis in the region. Together, geography, trade routes, energy dependence, and diaspora ties are turning West Asia into the focal point of India's foreign policy and national security. Here are just a few reasons why India has been further strengthening its relationships with the region, moving from civilizational ties to strategic alliances. This paper discusses the nature of the relationship between India and West Asia: it was a civilizational relationship, but is now a strategic alliance. The objectives are to establish historical relationships, examine economic and energy dependence, examine the influence of the diaspora, and reflect on the diplomatic, cultural, and security aspects shaping current India-West Asia relations.

Brief Overview of Civilizational Ties

The civilizational relationships of India with West Asia can be traced back to ancient trade and cultural interactions, as both sea and land routes connected the Indian port to Mesopotamia, Persia, and even the Arabian Peninsula. These relations led to economic prosperity and cultural diffusion, providing the basis for lasting socio-cultural relationships that continue to shape relations even in the present times. Archaeological and written data indicate that the Indus Valley Civilisation had trade connections with Mesopotamia, in which cotton textiles, spices, and precious stones were exported, while metals and timber were imported ([Possehl, 2002](#); [Ratnagar, 2004](#)). In the 7th and 6th centuries BCE, Babylonian constructors took Indian teak and cedar, and there was also an exchange of materials between the two regions. Sopara, Tamralipti, and Kaveripattinam were ports in India used not only as entry points for goods but also for religious and intellectual communication. The Arabian Peninsula opened as a route for Indian spices and textiles to the Mediterranean market, integrating India into global trade networks. The medieval period further strengthened these links through Islamic influence on Indian society, evident in architecture, language, and literature. The Indian intellectual tradition was enriched by Persian and Arabic texts, and under the rule of several dynasties, Indo-Persian art and culture blossomed ([Alam & Subrahmanyam, 2004](#)). These were two-way communications; Indian mathematics, astronomy, and medicinal knowledge were disseminated in the western world and influenced Islamic science ([Pingree, 1992](#)). This indicates that the relations between India and West Asia were multidimensional, based on trade, enhanced by cultural diffusion and supported by mutual intellectual traditions. Historical interactions laid the foundation for familiarity and mutual respect between the countries, and this is reflected in India's relations with the region even today.

Historical Background

Ancient Links: Indus Valley-Mesopotamia Trade and Maritime Connections

The earliest record of the interaction of India and West Asia is the evidence of the Indus Valley Civilisation (c.3000-1900 BCE). The Mesopotamian documents name the Indus region, commonly known as Meluhha, as a source of timber, ivory, beads, and cotton textiles ([Possehl, 2002](#)). In excavations at one of the Harappan sites,

such as Lothal, dockyards and seals bearing traces of trade with Sumer and Akkad at sea have been found ([Ratnagar, 2004](#)). The Indian merchandise was transported to the Mesopotamian cities of Ur and Babylon, and the lapses and metals entered the Indus. Such interactions did not involve only trade; they also led to the spread of culture, incorporating India into early civilizational networks in West Asia.

Medieval Period: Islamic Influence, Cultural and Linguistic Exchanges

Indo-West Asian relations were reinforced by the spread of the Muslim religion in medieval times. Persian and Arabic became languages of administration and scholarship in India, affecting literature, architecture and administration. The Indo-Persian culture present in both monuments and poems, as well as in court practice, can also be attributed to the Mughal Empire and the Delhi Sultanate ([Alam & Subrahmanyam, 2004](#)). The trade routes carried textiles, spices, and precious stones as far west as they went, and even Islamic scholarship was shaped by Indian mathematics and astronomy ([Pingree, 1992](#)). Indian society was not left impoverished by Persian art, calligraphy and Sufi, however. Through these interactions, a common intellectual and cultural legacy emerged that persists.

Colonial Era: British India's Ties with the Gulf and Persian Regions

British India was closely involved with West Asia throughout the colonial period due to strategic and economic interests. British domination over the states in the Persian Gulf began with the Persian Gulf Residency (1822-1971), which established British rule over the Gulf states such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar; administration of which was typically handled through Bombay ([Onley, 2009](#)). Both Indian traders and Indian workers were part of the Gulf economies, with Persian influence continuing to dominate Indian languages and the government. The Indian Great Game also connected India to the rest of West Asia because Britain sought to preclude Russia's grip over Persia and Afghanistan ([Hopkirk, 1990](#)). These connections strengthened India's geopolitical role in the region.

Early Post-Independence Relations: Non-Aligned Movement, Arab Solidarity, and Palestine

India's policy towards West Asia after independence in 1947 was influenced by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by its alliance with Arab countries. India has always been in favour of the Palestinian cause; it has promoted the two-state solution and has attended NAM ministerial committees on Palestine ([Kumaraswamy, 2010](#)). Meanwhile, India had pragmatic relations with Israel, juggling between ideological obligations and strategic demands. The policy of the so-called Link West stressed its solidarity with the Arab countries, energy relations, and the well-being of the diaspora. This strategy corresponded to India's general foreign policy of non-alignment, which aimed to keep its head above water and establish contacts with West Asia ([Pant, 2016](#)).

Economic and Strategic Dimensions

The relationships between India and West Asia can be characterised by complex dynamics of energy dependence, trade flows, diaspora remittances, defence collaboration, and multilateral foreign relations. These dimensions represent the ways in which the civilizational relationship has evolved into organised economic and strategic relationships.

Energy Security: India's Dependence on West Asian Oil and Gas

India's energy security is closely linked to West Asia. By 2025, almost 60 per cent of India's crude oil imports were expected to come from the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates ([International Energy Agency \[IEA\], 2025](#)). The importation of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar accounted for nearly half of India's LNG supply, reinforcing the region's inability to supply LNG. The Strait of Hormuz, through which the majority of such shipments pass, is a major chokepoint; any disruption to it directly affects domestic energy prices and inflation in India ([Pant, 2016](#)). India has tried to diversify through imports from Russia

and the United States, but its structural reliance on Gulf energy persists. The strategic petroleum reserves have limited buffering capacity, whereas long-term energy security needs constant relations with suppliers in West Asia (IEA, 2025). Petronet LNG of India has signed long-term contracts with Qatar that ensure a stable supply. Through these agreements, India underscores its reliance on Gulf energy markets and the need for diplomatic stability to sustain energy flows.

Trade and Investment: Bilateral Figures and Remittances

One of India's largest trading partners is West Asia. As part of fiscal year 2024-25, India traded more than USD 160 billion with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) through imports and exports of oil, machinery, textiles, and food products (World Bank, 2025). Also important are Indian diaspora remittances. India remained the largest recipient of remittances worldwide, with more than 8.5 million Indians in the Gulf countries remitting USD 135.4 billion in 2025 (World Bank, 2025). These inflows stabilise the external sector in India and subsidise millions of households. There are also closer investment relationships. Signing the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2022 increased trade between the two nations and provided additional opportunities in the infrastructure, renewable energy, and digital sectors (Kumaraswamy, 2010). Indian technology and energy projects are among the investments the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia has made, demonstrating increased economic interdependence (see Table 1).

Table 1: India–GCC Trade and Remittances (2020–2025)

Year	Bilateral Trade (USD bn)	Remittances (USD bn)
2020	118	83
2022	145	111
2025	160	135.4

(Source: World Bank, 2025; IEA, 2025)

Strategic Partnerships: Defence, Counter-Terrorism, and Maritime Security

The economic ties between India and West Asia are not the only strategy of India. There is an increase in defence cooperation with joint military exercises, including Desert Flag (UAE) and Cyclone (Saudi Arabia), which improves interoperability (Pant, 2016). There has been an increase in counterterrorism cooperation, with intelligence on extremist financing and radical networks exchanged. Another priority is maritime security. The navy of India cooperates with Oman and the UAE to protect the sea routes in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden through which energy is shipped. The involvement of India in I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE, US) and the India-Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) is an indicator of a shift toward multi-pillar associations that combine economic, technological, and security aspects (Alam & Subrahmanyam, 2004). I2U2 was launched in 2022 and focuses on food security, renewable energy, and technology partnerships. India's role shows that it can strike the right equilibrium between the old energy reliance and new strategic relationships.

Role of Organisations: OPEC, GCC, and IORA

West Asia's interrelations with India are mediated by regional entities. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has a direct impact on India's energy security through its pricing policies. India has its largest trading bloc partner, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), but talks to enter into a free trade agreement are underway (Onley, 2009). Another major participant in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), which has advanced security at sea and economic collaboration with West Asian members, including Oman and Iran, is India. These institutional structures provide stability and predictability to India's involvement, thereby strengthening its position as a bridge between South and West Asia. India's economic and strategic relationships with West Asia are numerous. The most important variable remains energy dependence, but trade, diaspora remittances, defence relations, and multilateral activity through OPEC, the GCC, and IORA are also influencing India's foreign policy. These dimensions underscore how civilizational relationships have evolved to form

strategic alliances in line with India's national security and economic development, making West Asia a necessity for India.

Political and Diplomatic Engagement

The politics and diplomatic relations of India with West Asia are determined by delicate juggling between Israel, Palestine, and the Arab world, strategic connectivity with Iran via the Chabahar Port, strong energy and diaspora relationships with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar, and involvement in conflict resolution and peacekeeping in the region.

India's Balanced Approach: Israel, Palestine, and Arab Nations

India has supported the Palestinian cause, advocated the two-state solution, and at the same time increased its relations with Israel in the fields of defence, technology, and agriculture. India has been seeking a sensible compromise since the Abraham Accords (2020): reinforcing the economic and security partnership with Israel and enhancing the trade and cultural relations with Arab countries. Such a split strategy enables India to protect its energy security and its diaspora without angering anyone.

Relations with Iran: Chabahar Port and Connectivity Projects

Iran remains important to India's regional connectivity strategy. The Chabahar Port is an Indian-funded project that gives India direct access to Afghanistan and Central Asia without going through Pakistan. It is also one of the hubs of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which connects India with Russia and Europe. Geopolitics: India has maintained ties with Iran despite U.S. sanctions, seeking to diversify its energy sources and achieve strategic independence. India also signed a working arrangement to control the Chabahar ports, a move that reiterates its interest despite sanctions pressure. The project enhances India's regional connectivity and increases its bargaining power in West Asia.

Relations with Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar

The Gulf state's are India's largest trading partners and energy suppliers. India-GCC trade stood at USD 162 billion in FY 2023-4, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE as the leading oil exporters and investors. The UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) stimulated bilateral trade, and the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia invested in Indian infrastructure and technology. Qatar remains essential for LNG supplies and diaspora remittances. In 2025, India and Qatar signed a USD 10 billion strategic partnership agreement to deepen cooperation in energy, technology, and security. Diaspora Dimension, over 8.5 million Indians reside in the Gulf, and they remit over USD 135 billion (2025). Their welfare has always been part of India's diplomacy.

India's Role in Regional Conflicts and Peacekeeping

India has established itself as a neutral in the conflict in West Asia. During the 2025-26 Iran-Israel tensions, India urged de-escalation and proposed a regional security structure through the BRICS. India's work in establishing peace in Lebanon and Syria under the UN demonstrates its commitment to maintaining peace. India's foreign policy is one of practical, interest-based interaction: by protecting energy supplies, the welfare of the diaspora, and trade routes, the country seeks to avoid involvement in sectarian conflicts. The Indian political and diplomatic involvement in West Asia is a multi-vector strategy: balancing between Israel and Palestine, using Iran as a connectivity hub, and furthering partnerships with the Gulf to invest, secure energy, and contribute to conflict resolution. This strategy highlights that India has shifted from being a civilizational ally to a strategic ally in West Asian security and economic stability.

Cultural and Civilizational Links

The interaction between India and West Asia is not only political and economic but also deeply rooted in culture. Common day-to-day heritage, diaspora relations, and educational interactions have established long-term civilizational ties that continue to influence modern-day interactions.

Shared Heritage: Language, Food, Religion, and Art

Cultural interactions between India and West Asia are centuries old. Language is one of the prominent indicators: Persian and Arabic are also similar to Indian languages, especially Urdu and Hindi, in terms of vocabulary, script and literature ([Alam & Subrahmanyam, 2004](#)). This same blend of Indian biryani and kebabs has its origins in Persian and Arab culinary traditions, and Indian spices changed the cuisine of West Asia.

Interaction on religious grounds was also important. Religions were introduced to India through Arab merchants, and Sufi saints and Hindu and Buddhist concepts were spread to the West, shaping philosophy. This blend is reflected in art and architecture: the Indo-Islamic monuments, such as the Qutb Minar and the Mughal palaces, provide examples of blending Persian and Arabic art with Indian art ([Asher, 1992](#)).

Indian Diaspora in West Asia: Social and Cultural Impact

Cultural bridging has also occurred among the Indian diaspora in the West Asian region, which comprises more than 8.5 million individuals. The migrants from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat introduced their languages, festivals and food to Gulf societies. It is also culturally familiar, as Indian films, music, and television are heavily consumed in the region.

Diaspora communities also contribute to social cohesion through their participation in local economies, even as they preserve their cultural values. Christian celebrations like Diwali and Onam are held in Dubai, Doha and Muscat, and the local Arab communities usually get involved. This soft power enhances the presence of Indian culture and intensifies people-to-people relationships ([World Bank, 2025](#)).

Educational and Cultural Exchanges

Over the last few decades, education exchanges have increased. Gulf universities attract thousands of Indian students, and other Indian institutions, such as Gulf Coasts, Manipal University Dubai, and BITS Pilani Dubai, offer Indian courses in other countries. On the other hand, Gulf students pursue education in Indian universities, especially in medicine and engineering.

Cultural diplomacy has something to do with it. Art exhibitions, film festivals, and literary events are frequently held in India and West Asia. The India-UAE Cultural Agreement (2022) institutionalised the collaboration in heritage conservation and performing arts. Yoga is popular in many nations, and Indian classical dance and music are performed at the cultural centres in Abu Dhabi and Riyadh.

Note. Modification of [Alam & Subrahmanyam \(2004\)](#), [Asher \(1992\)](#), and [World Bank \(2025\)](#).

The cultural and civilizational connections between India and West Asia are multidimensional, rooted in shared heritage, sustained by the diaspora, and enriched by educational and cultural exchanges. These patterns of civilizational overlap in West Asia and India may be summarised in terms of language, cuisine, religion and art (see Table 2). Such dealings establish a basis of familiarity and admiration, which strengthens the strategic and economic relationship examined elsewhere.

Challenges and Opportunities

India has been dealing with West Asia with a fine balance between challenges and opportunities. The volatility in the region, interstate rivalry, and the weakness of the Indian diaspora pose significant challenges. Meanwhile, the Gulf's shift towards renewable energy, the emergence of the digital economy, and the bold connectivity initiatives provide new opportunities for collaboration.

Regional Instability: Conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq

West Asia has always been an uncertain political and security environment, and the conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Iraq have had a ripple effect throughout the region. These conflicts are both direct and indirect to India. The civil war in Syria has compromised trade routes in the region and caused humanitarian disasters, prompting India to act by providing aid and diplomatic assistance. The Yemen war, especially in and around the Bab el Mandeb Strait, will pose a threat to maritime security, as well as energy shipments destined to India. The Iraqi political situation is weak, although it is among the largest oil suppliers to India, which raises concerns about the stability of energy supply.

The Indian policy has been restrained: it has never engaged in any military action, yet it has been urging all parties to resolve through multilateral leaders, such as the United Nations. Such a policy reflects India's overall non-aligned tradition, focusing on dialogue and humanitarian aid rather than intervention. However, the persistence of instability indicates the fragility of India's energy security and the welfare of the diaspora.

Table 2: Comparative Cultural Table: India–West Asia Civilizational Links

Dimension	India Contribution	West Asia Contribution	Shared Impact / Overlap
Language	Sanskrit, Hindi, and Urdu are enriched by Persian and Arabic vocabulary	Persian and Arabic literary traditions	Indo-Persian literature, Urdu poetry, shared scripts
Food	Spices (cardamom, pepper, turmeric), biryani, curries	Kebabs, dates, and coffee traditions	Fusion cuisine (biryani, kebabs, spiced stews)
Religion	Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism; the spread of ideas westward	Islam, Christianity, Judaism	Sufi traditions in India: shared philosophical exchanges
Art & Architecture	Mughal monuments, Indo-Islamic design	Persian calligraphy, Arab geometric patterns	Qutb Minar, Taj Mahal, and Indo-Persian palaces
Diaspora Influence	8.5 million Indians in the Gulf, festivals (Diwali, Onam)	Host societies integrating Indian culture	Bollywood films, Indian cuisine, and yoga in Gulf cities
Education	Indian universities hosting Gulf students	Gulf universities hosting Indian diaspora students	Cross-regional academic exchanges, joint institutions (BITS Pilani Dubai, Manipal Dubai)
Cultural Diplomacy	Yoga, classical dance, and Bollywood	Arab music, poetry, and Islamic art	Joint festivals, exhibitions, India–UAE cultural agreements

Balancing Ties with Rival States

India must walk a fine line in West Asian politics. The Iran-Saudi Arabia competition is especially difficult. Chabahar Port and the International North-South Transport Corridor offer Iran strategic opportunities to reach India, bypassing Pakistan, and to enable India to reach Central Asia and Europe. Simultaneously, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are India's largest energy suppliers and investors. Strong relationships with both parties require an act of pragmatism.

A similar case can be seen in the relations between India, Israel, and Palestine. India has always been a proponent of a two-state solution to the Palestinian issue, as well as voting in the global forums in support of Palestine. However, India's defence, technological, and agricultural collaboration with Israel has grown since the 1990s. The situation was further complicated by the Abraham Accords of 2020, which aimed to establish a stronger

relationship with the Arab countries and reinforce its alliance with Israel. This balancing approach enables India to protect energy flows, the welfare of the diaspora, and defence without antagonising any party.

Security of the Indian Diaspora

With a population of over 8.5 million in West Asia, the Indian diaspora is both a strength and a weakness. Gulf expatriates remitted USD 135 billion in 2025, a figure that is one of the pillars of India's external sector. Diaspora communities, however, are vulnerable to danger during regional conflicts and political unrest. India has already shown its ability to defend its citizens abroad by evacuating them in large numbers. The evacuation of thousands of Indians in war-torn Yemen in 2015 under Operation Rahat was used to underscore how India cares about its diaspora welfare, with similar operations in Libya and Iraq also making the point. These operations are logistical successes and diplomatic endeavours and therefore require coordination with host governments and international organisations. Protecting the diaspora has been a key focus of India's policy in West Asia, which strengthens the human aspect of India-West Asia interaction.

Future Opportunities: Renewable Energy, Digital Economy, and Strategic Connectivity

However, despite the adversities, West Asia has much to offer for India's future involvement. In their diversification efforts, Gulf state's are channelling significant funds into renewable energy, particularly solar and hydrogen projects. With its expertise in renewable technologies, India can be a strong partner in this transition. Hydrogen production and joint ventures in solar parks can also help restructure the energy relationship, shifting away from hydrocarbons. Another frontier is the digital economy. The IT sector in India has begun collaborating with Gulf partners in fintech, artificial intelligence, and smart cities. The development of new cities, including the Dubai Smart City project and Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, aligns with India's digital capabilities, and opportunities for cooperation in technology and innovation can be established. Strategic connectivity programs also enhance India's ability to serve as a regional connector. Connected by rail, port, and digital infrastructure, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, announced at the G20 Summit in 2023, is a route between India and Europe via the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. Also, the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), based at Iran's Chabahar Port, links India with Russia and Europe. Such projects make India a key location in international supply chains, thereby increasing its strategic independence. India's involvement in West Asia is a complex affair, balancing challenges and opportunities. The instability and competition in the region demand reserved diplomacy, whereas the diaspora security demands measures. Simultaneously, transformative opportunities are presented by renewable energy, digital economy projects, and connectivity. The skill with which India can manoeuvre these forces will define its long-term presence as a strategic partner in West Asia. Through a blend of practical diplomacy and future-oriented alliances, India will be able to build civilizational relations into a strong system of economic development and stability with the region.

CONCLUSION

The India-West Asia relationship can be best described as a linear process that began with early interactions between civilisations and has now evolved into strategic relationships. Historically, trade, cultural diffusion, and common intellectual traditions have evolved into systematic collaboration in energy, trade, defence, and diplomacy. This continuity of civilisation gives India an added edge: they are not coming to West Asia as foreigners but as an old-based partner that has been integrating their social and cultural fabric into the region since time immemorial. India has gained strategic depth in its relationships with West Asia in the modern era. Dependence on energy, diaspora remittances, and military cooperation are the pillars of the relationship, and new opportunities in renewable energy, digital innovations, and connectivity corridors will change it. The fact that India has managed to strike an equilibrium among its neighbours' competing powers, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, or Israel and Palestine, shows that India has adopted a pragmatic diplomacy. This balancing act is not only a strategic one but also the way India serves as a bridge between East and West, linking Asian economies with the European market through other projects, such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor. The diaspora is another factor that gives India an advantage as a bridge between societies, serving as a living link between the

two. Indians in the Gulf are millions of people who contribute to the local economy and, at the same time, retain their cultural heritage, ensuring that India is present not only in economic affairs but also in the civilizational sphere. This twin identity makes India more powerful through soft power and enhances the country's credibility as a partner that understands the region's intricacies. Moving forward, several policy suggestions will reinforce these relationships. First, India should enhance collaboration on renewable energy and hydrogen projects that support the Gulf states diversification efforts. Second, leveraging digital partnerships in fintech, artificial intelligence, and smarter infrastructure will ensure that India does not fall behind during the region's economic transformation. Third, India also needs to protect its diaspora by taking active diplomatic measures and crisis management strategies. Lastly, India should use multilateral forums like OPEC, the GCC, and IORA to institutionalise cooperation, thereby ensuring stable, predictable participation. The relationship between India and West Asia is therefore multidimensional, based on the continuity of civilisations, enhanced by cultural and diaspora relations and then maintained by the strategic depth. India can be a bridge linking East and West, strong, visionary, and win-win, by accepting both her past and her future.

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