Chapter 2
Indian Approaches to E-Diplomacy: An Overview

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ABSTRACT

Diplomacy refers to the professional activity or skills that are used to manage and strengthen the relations on international or global level. E-diplomacy can be termed as the new mode of conducting diplomacy acts with the help of internet and information and communication technologies (ICTs). In general, we often say that diplomacy is maintained of relations through communication. It is the art of conducting negotiations, forming alliances, discussing treaties, and reaching agreements. This can be done with proper communication which helps maintain a social image. Moreover, communication in diplomacy is that tactful move that ensures that the diplomat smoothly handles the relations with the other parties and makes them do what is needed without harming the interests and profits of either of two or more parties. This ensures peace and eliminates the feeling of ill-will. The chapter sheds light on the emergence of e-diplomacy in India, its advantages, use, and the future uses as well.

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INTRODUCTION

Former French President and General Charles de Gaulle (1890 – 1970) had said, “Diplomacy is the art of letting someone have it, your way.” India is a country that is globalizing and growing at a very fast pace. With the emergence of various new ideas and technologies, the government is now taking measures to strengthen the country’s position at world level. One of the major and all time important resource to achieve this is diplomacy. As mentioned, emergence of new technologies has influenced the government to enter into e- diplomacy. E- diplomacy is a more convenient form of maintaining a healthy relation both within the country and at world level. Its use would help in making the country more versatile and hence more globally renowned and recognized (Elassar, 2014).

EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

Our country is recently ranked among the top 10 nations in terms of its digital or e- diplomacy. The contribution of India towards digital diplomacy is commendable and worth a praise. The Diplomacy Live, a global research, advocacy, consulting and training platform has mentioned the country’s name in the list based on the diplomacy performance of India over the past years. Apart from India, Mexico is the only developing country who made it in the list. India has been ranked number 7 according to Diplomacy Live. This surely is a fantastic start for the country.

What is a surprise here that our country doesn’t maintain a high budget for public diplomacy. The official Facebook page of Ministry of External Affairs has more than 1.2 million followers. This excludes its companion page ‘Indian Diplomacy’ which itself has around 850,000 followers. On Twitter, the combined presence of Ministry of External Affairs Official Spokesperson’s account plus the Public Diplomacy account has crossed 1.2million followers. There around 40,000 subscribers of Ministry of External Affairs on YouTube. Ministry of External Affairs has an official Instagram, G+, Soundcloud account/page. All these various social media page or account of Ministry of External Affairs has a following that ranges between 4 million to 20 million and is increasing day by day. The unique Mobile App of Ministry of External Affairs has bagged more than 150,000 downloads on both Android and IOS platforms. Encouraged by the success, the App is now being launched with updated technologies. One of the officials of Ministry of External Affairs said, “Online presence plays a critical role in many crisis situations and was instrumental during recent evacuation effort from Yemen, Libya and during the earthquake in Nepal.”
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