

# Concept of Sraddha in International Relations

Vas' Work

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## Abstract

There are various concepts that are studied, discussed, debated and written on in International Relations. The researches are being conducted in order to establish relationship between two different concepts. The Concept of Sraddha is a non-Western rational outlook that widens the scope to study International Relations. The first part of the article consists of the Concept of Sraddha, its meaning and the sources of knowledge. The Second part consists of the Concept of Sraddha in International Relations and its applicability with the three major perspectives and parity vision of Ved Vyas.

Keywords: Sraddha, Sources of knowledge, judgment, International Relations, actors in international system.

## Introduction

The International Relations discipline has been studied by the experts and students on the basis of various theoretical notions. These theories are adopted by various actors such as states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, multinational companies, transnational organizations as well as individuals; hence their actions can be studied by experts on the basis of theories. The existing theories that are considered to study International Relations have mostly emerged in the Western world. However, those are applied throughout the world. Consequently, there is a need to develop Non-Western IR theory in order to create a balance in the world. As discussed in the previous article, there is also a need to contribute something substantial that can contribute to the mankind for the betterment of the life on the Planet Earth.

All the existing great powers of the world, the P5 (USA, UK, France, Russia and China) members have contributed to mankind the concepts of Freedom, Democracy, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Economic Equality through Communism and the Idea of Third World. All the above concepts are meant for individuals; however, all the concepts apply to the states and actors of the International Relations as well. This piece of work is an attempt to give this society the Concept of Sraddha that is similarly applicable for the individuals as well as the actors of the international relations.

This piece of work is an attempt to create a non-Western IR theory as there is a scope to view the world differently. Secondly, the way great powers have contributed various concepts to the mankind, here is an attempt to present another concept i.e. Concept of Sraddha. Why are we discussing about sraddha in Political Science or in International Relations discipline? International Relations is a discipline in which we discuss about the relations between international actors. So here, in IR there are various actors in the international system in which one actor is in a competition with other actors or is in cooperation or is having a conflict or they simply co-exist. A relationship between the actors of same perspective might be easier to deal with. However, a relationship between the actors having adopted different perspectives might become difficult. Here, sraddha can play a pivotal role in becoming a path to move on in order to achieve their goals and maintain the relationship cordially.

## Concept of Sraddha

Sraddha is neither a feeling, nor a thought. Sraddha is not even a value; however, it is a necessary element for putting thoughts into action. It is a process which leads the thoughts of human beings getting applied into action that gets accomplished with success. Thought is generated in mind before the action takes place. On the basis of past experiences, understanding, one can think about taking up any task. That task may result as per assumption, or it may bring out something different which may become an individual's discovery or a new invention. Sraddha can thus be a path to move on. To begin any task, one requires sraddha. That sraddha helps an individual to give a shape to his/her thought. Thoughts thus begin the journey of sraddha to come into action.

An individual undertakes any project, does any task when s/he is sure about his/her capabilities and have a positive outlook towards the project that would be accomplished with the hard work and determination. Here, there is a hope that the work will be accomplished. From where does this hope and confidence emerge? It emerges from within, based on whatever one has learnt after the birth as a human being. An individual has sraddha that the work which s/he is thinking about can be done by him/her in such a manner that s/he might become a successful person or may earn good money or would be able to continue that business throughout the life and there is a scope of expansion. There is a thought of gaining either knowledge or money or fame, which leads individuals to undertake the project, policies, and products. This applies to any actor of international system as well. Any state with the aim to develop may adopt various policies based on experiences, observation and successes. Any NGO might take up a task to provide aids to certain group of people in the society can do so only if they put their thoughts into practice. For any International Organization, arranging of a summit based on any major international issue in which they try to bring the leaders of the states together and manage their security arrangements as well as they try to raise the issue and put the thought in the world that needs to be addressed. This also requires sraddha in accomplishing the summit successfully.

## Meaning of Sraddha

What is the meaning of Sraddha? "Sraddha is a Sanskrit word made up of two elements Srati+Dha, Srati means Truth and Dha means to seek or to attain, which means that one has to 'Seek

the Truth”’. (the text is originally in Gujarati language. This is its translation.) (Viditatmananda, Gita Darshan, 2016, p. 557)

Another definition of Sraddha is that “Sraddha is a judgement before knowledge, subject to correction on verification.” This definition is given by Swami Dayanand Saraswati from Annaikatti, Tamilnadu. A researcher has a judgment of the outcome and hence s/he calls it a hypothesis. It is a judgement before gaining the knowledge, doing research one can reach the judgement or it may change after doing verification. It gives a place for questioning, verification and modification. Let us try to understand both the definitions.

According to the first definition, one can seek the truth behind any event that takes place in the international system. The question then is, is the truth same for everyone from any point of view? At one point of time, each individual would believe something as their truth, based on that truth, the individual deals in the world. However, there is a possibility of change in the Truth one believes in, based on experiences, observations and successes one achieves.

“Satvanurupa sarvasya sraddha bhavati bharat; sraddhamayoyam purushah yo yachchrddhah sa eva saha.” (Viditatmananda, Gita Darshan, 2016, p. 557)

This is a shloka in chapter 17 of Bhagvad Gita. Krishna calls Arjuna as ‘Bharat’ and explains him that everyone has got sraddha according to their inner cause. Human being is basically made up of sraddha. An individual is having his nature according to his/her sraddha. ‘Sraddha’ is prevalent in this world; however, it is not revealed or realized by the people. Similarly, an actor also possesses sraddha according to her nature.

It means that an individual has his/her Truth and believes in something as Truth very dedicatedly. For example, a person has joined a political party and is faithful to the party to such an extent that s/he cannot accept its losing in elections or tries all means to win the elections. For that person the ideology and the working of party is Truth at that point of time. However, s/he may not get enough recognition for the dedication the individual has exhibited for the party, and is ignored, not given ticket, ticket given to his/her competitor in the party can lead that individual to think beyond the political party s/he has joined. Here, the individual’s truth changes. For that individual, joining other party which acknowledges all its party members could become Truth and become dedicated towards that thought. Same is the case in the matter of religion. Basic nature of human being is to gain success, and attain respect from the society. This is possible only in some cases, where the individuals become successful. In today’s world success is measured in terms of fame and money. Consequently,

one wants success at very young age, and be famous so that the individual can live an easeful life. For that, the individual does not try to seek the Truth, however, tries to find Truth in various options available around such as gaining likes on Social Media or winning a competition of reality shows on Television, etc.

According to another definition, Sraddha is a judgement taken before the knowledge is attained. This is very much similar to the previous definition. It is said in a different manner. When an individual grows older, s/he has gained experience, has observed others and the surroundings and the tasks in which s/he is capable to succeed. Sraddha here is a judgement based on those experiences, observations and successes, a judgement is taken for some task to be done in future or one may not know the result of the experiment or some project. However, that judgement leads an individual to move ahead on the path with positive attitude. This also leads a person to do hard work and work with strong determination. For example, I am trying to explain what Sraddha is. Here, based on my experiences and observations, I thought that there is a need and possibility to write a Concept of Sraddha in International Relations discipline. Earlier, I got success in writing articles, based on it I could take this project and am writing on it. My Sraddha is that you are reading it and the meaning that I have tried to explain has been understood by you. Hence, Sraddha is a judgement based on the sources of knowledge that can be achieved with strong determination, hard work and positive attitude in order to accomplish the task undertaken.

Another definition of Sraddha is given by Swami Dayanand Saraswati's disciple, Swami Sadatmanandji that "Sraddha is a sense of validity in the source of knowledge." In order to understand the definition one needs to find the probable and the various sources of knowledge.

### Sources of Knowledge

There is a shloka or hymn in Bhagvad Gita. "Sraddhavan labhate gyanam, tatparah sayatendriyah; gyanam labdhwa param shantimchirenadhi gacchati." (Viditatmananda, Gita Darshan, 2016, p. 186) These shloka says that the person who has got Sraddha, eagerness to attain knowledge, one would be able to have self-control easily. As soon as he attains knowledge, he feels peace of mind from within.

Anyone who wants to attain knowledge should have sraddha. So how to seek the truth or reach any judgment which can help attain knowledge? One can seek the truth or reach any

judgment through a process in which there can be various sources of knowledge that play a pivotal role. Any individual may first rely on the primary sources of knowledge that is his/her gyanedriyas (five senses).

Sometimes, I lack confidence and I rely on my near ones, who pour confidence in me by reminding me about my capabilities or the works that I have done previously and have completed successfully. There may be some criticism around as well, however one needs to take up a challenge and stay motivated to convert that criticism into praise. Consequently, the validity on the sources of knowledge can be received from internal sources as well as external sources.

#### Internal Sources of Knowledge

The Sraddha comes from within based on our own experiences, observations and successes for the completion of tasks so far attained. ‘Sraddha’ term has been misinterpreted so far that it is trust or faith on which one is dependent on some outer unit. “Sraddha is in the attitude towards the Sastra (source of knowledge) – that it is true, it is a pramana. If it is regarded as speculation, we do not have ‘Satya-buddhi’, ‘this is true’ only with satya-buddhi, it becomes a ‘pramana’. Suppose I hold up a flower and say, “this is a rabbit.” When I say this, you have no ‘satya-buddhi’ in my words. You have ‘satya-buddhi’ in your eyes. What your eyes see is true, not what the Swami says. Why? Because what your eyes see, that sight cannot be denied.” (Saraswati, 2019, pp. 72-73)

There are five sense organs that human beings possess –Gyanendriyas namely ears, touch, eyes, nose and tongue. These are our sources of knowledge. The human being, after taking birth begins collecting information about this world through these five sense organs. Internal Sraddha deals with the individual’s gyanendriyas (Sense organs). These five sense organs are the sources of knowledge for human beings. All the sense organs collect the data and store it in our memory. So, whenever we come across the same thing again, we immediately can remember it, based on our memory. It works like an input in computers. Similarly, it receives commands from the brain. However, brain is an organ of human body.

All the organs of the body are connected with the Soul. The way all the electric equipment such as bulbs, tube lights, fans, air conditioners, heaters, etc are connected with the power supply, all the body parts are connected with the Soul (power supplier). The sense organs thus receive commands from the Soul and use brain to understand the world around and store

it in the memory. Gradually, an individual gains information which is used as knowledge when it is well understood by the individual. Now, when an individual tries to seek the Truth through his/her sense organs, or s/he is relying or dependent on the memory and brain that are connected with Soul, which may lead the individual to accomplish the project or policy as it comes from within. This Sraddha cannot be attacked or destroyed by anyone in this world.

Now, what could be the internal sources for a state in the international system? The internal sources of knowledge are the ideologies, the Concepts and the theories of International Relations which is adopted by the actors of the international system. Any actor can further utilize her resources in various forms such as natural resources, human resources, military resources, etc.

#### External Sources of Knowledge

The various external sources are the ones on which an individual relies in order to gain knowledge. They have a sense of validity in that outer source of knowledge. As discussed above, 'Sraddhavan labhate gyanam...' an individual with sraddha can attain knowledge. According to the Vedanta, attaining 'Enlightenment' is the true knowledge. This kind of knowledge can be gained by having sraddha in Upanishads and Brahma sutra. However, an individual may require a Guru to interpret the Upanishads. So having sraddha in the words of a Guru is another source of knowledge. Very rare group of individuals might aim to achieve such knowledge.

A small child may have mother as his/her source of knowledge. When they grow little older their sources of knowledge could be father, teachers of school, friends in the school and the books they refer to.

Most of the individuals would choose to gain knowledge in their own subject (discipline) that they have pursued during their higher education. For that, they have to have sraddha in the books and articles written by the experts of those discipline. This could be a major source of knowledge. Other sources could be Professors, seniors doing research on the topic from any part of the world.

The individuals who are working in primary sector may gain knowledge from the climate as well as physiographic surroundings. The individuals working in secondary sector may gain knowledge from the raw materials they use, from their managers as well as the industry owners who have a vision. The research wing of the industry may also transfer knowledge for the production of new products. The individuals working in service sector are meant to



provide services and connect the people of the world. As they deal with different kind of people throughout the world, their source of knowledge are those different people.

Religious people may have their religious heads who interpret the religious books as the source of knowledge. For atheists, the source of knowledge could be their positive attitude towards themselves. They rely on their brain and try to exploit brain in order to gain knowledge. And the political leaders are the sources of knowledge for the members of political parties. These political leaders have thinkers as their sources of knowledge to follow the path those thinkers have shown.

The external sources of knowledge for states are her diplomats sending in information, agreements or treaties signed with other actors on different platforms. The scholars writing on various events and their analysis are another important source of knowledge. The indigenous people residing abroad are also the sources of knowledge for any state.

Consequently, there are various external sources for different types of individuals. The condition is that, the external sources in the form of human beings need to be willing to support and supply knowledge to the one who is dependent or rely on them.

### Significance of Sraddha in International Relations

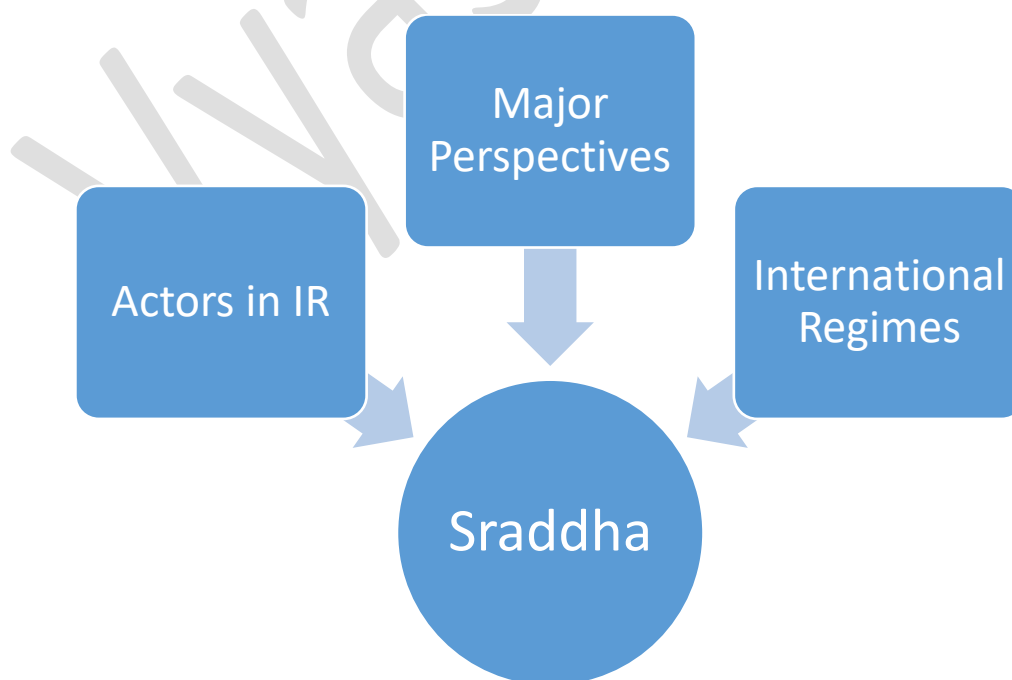
International Relations cannot be imagined without theories. Relevance of the theories is and will always be there. Without theories the study of any event is incomplete. According to the meaning of Sraddha, it is prevalent in this world in each and every action of the actors of International System. Each and every theory needs to be converted into action and then the actions in the form of events are further studied. This process of conversion of thought into action makes sraddha an important concept. Here, Sraddha is a necessary element to convert the thoughts into action. (Viditatmananda, Om Namah Shivay (Gujarati), 2012, p. 70) Wherever there are theories and thoughts, they require a process to get converted into actions. Hence, sraddha is a necessary process or element in IR. It is a rational process. Actions without thoughts or reflection, on the outcome are irrational.

It is possible that the thoughts are put into action even without sraddha. However, the thoughts that are transformed into action with sraddha have higher probability to get successful than the actions taken without giving a thought. The task done just for the sake of

doing something without thinking makes it irrational. So, it may sometimes remain incomplete or may turn out as failure.

## Concept of Sraddha in International Relations

International Relations is a discipline that describes, discusses and debates over the relationship amongst the actors of the International System. There are several actors in international relations such as the states and the non-state actors such as international organizations, transnational organizations, multi-national corporations, non-governmental organizations as well as individuals. James Rosenau considers people as actors in the globalized world. (Rosenau, 2008) All these actors do have a perspective to which one is inclined to and has Sraddha based on the perspective. These perspectives are thoughts which need to be applied practically. It is sraddha that can transform the ideas of various ideologies into action. Consequently, sraddha prevailed in the International Relations discipline since its inception, however was never realized or recognized by anyone so far. International regimes are norms set to be followed by the actors according to the dynamic nature of the international relations. If sraddha is added to the regimes, then the International System would be able to attain 'Truth' behind the events that are taking place. Normally the rules or norms are comprehensive.



Hence, regimes are universally applicable. 'Truth' is also comprehensive and universally applicable. Consequently, the actors in the international system have perspectives as the sources of knowledge and follow the international regimes in order to be successful in implementing their policies. Sraddha comes from within. In international relations, a state's intellectual people are like the gyanedriyas, based on which, they formulate the foreign policy with a Sraddha that its implementation would bring benefits to both or all the actors involved. As explained above, Sraddha is a judgement, which can further be changed based on verification. Various types of foreign policies are implemented. However, if it does not prove to be beneficial, another policy is formulated and delineated. Consequently, the intellectual property of any state becomes pivotal for leaders and decision makers, as these people would be able to create something new and give it to the World. In each area, discipline or business, art, any aspect, something new is always required as our life and this world are dynamic. Sraddha is relevant in terms of guiding these intellectuals to move on a different path from what this world is already doing and take up the task to come up with their creations. Let us try to understand how Sraddha can be studied with major perspectives in IR.

### Sraddha According to Major Perspectives of IR

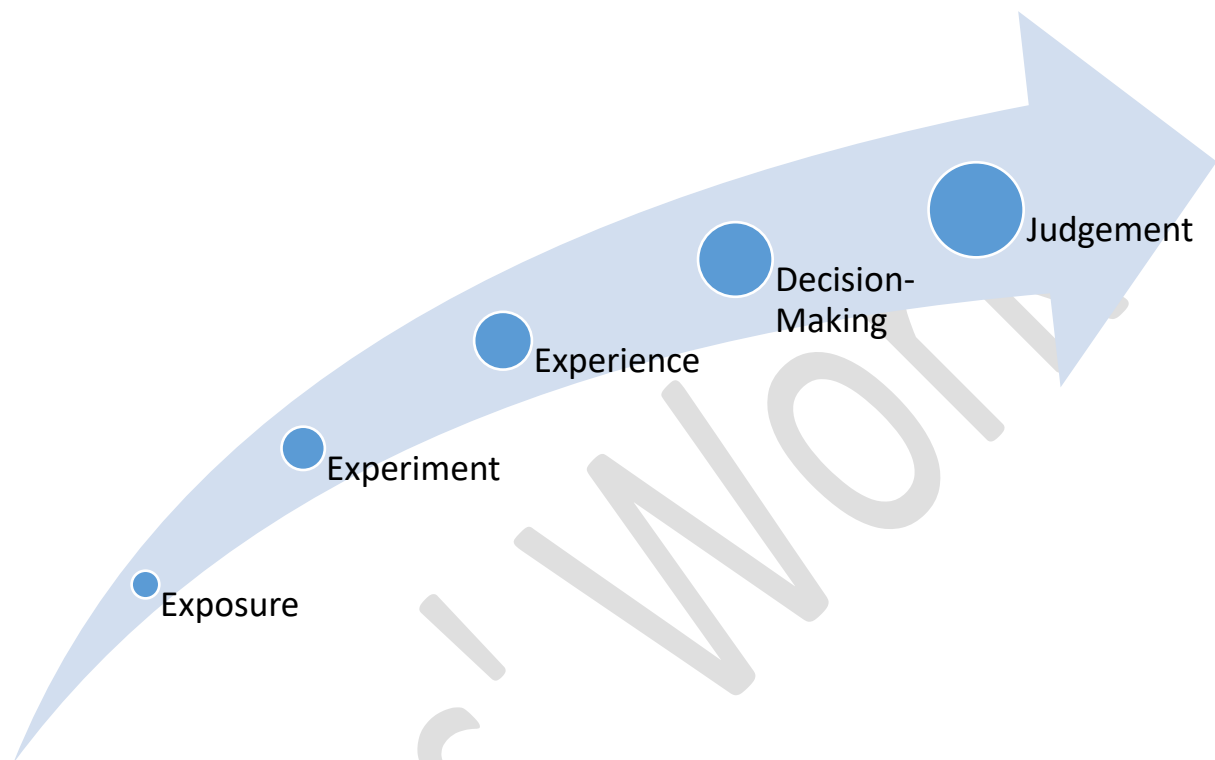
Sraddha is a process in which thoughts are taking a shape in the form of action. As international relations have three major perspectives, we shall try to understand how the thoughts of all these perspectives are converted into action.

#### Liberalism

Liberalism gives exposure to the individuals by the minimum role of the state. This exposure gives an individual to experiment based on the thoughts which can be further converted into actions with the help of sraddha i.e the judgement based on the thought and achieves success.

The process shown in the chart, indicates the relevance of judgement taken on the basis of prior experience and hence is reliable. By further verification, one can confirm with the

judgement taken. However, the judgement taken is subject to change. In International Relations, the states or actors, which is studied with a liberal perspective can adopt above process in order to strengthen relations with other actors.



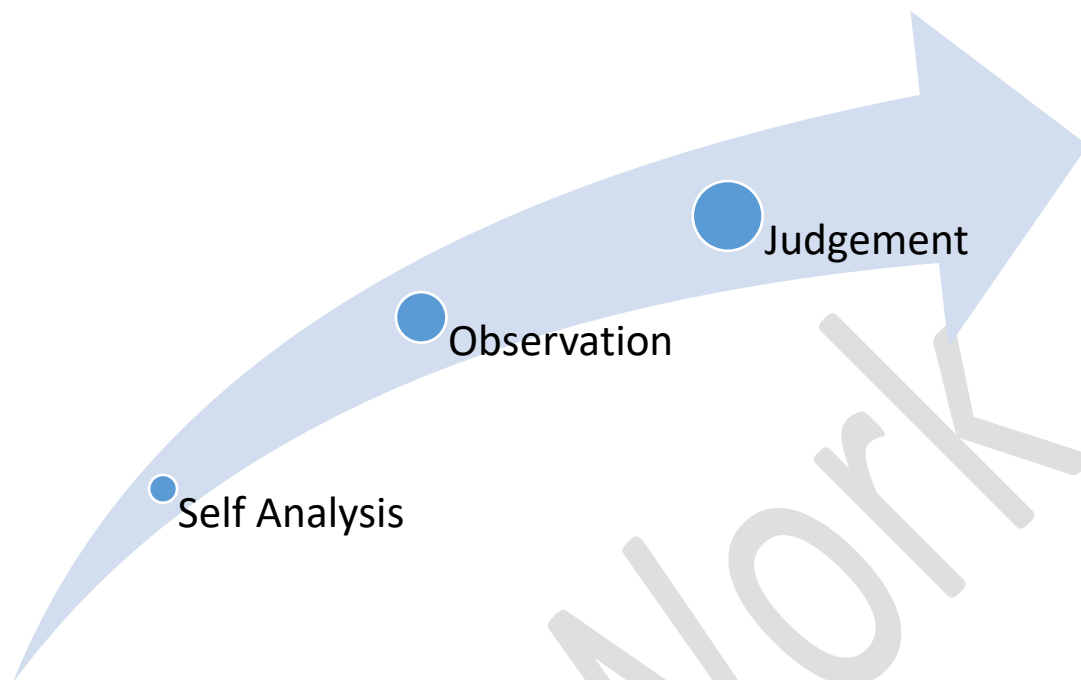
Source: Transcript of lectures on 'Personality Development' by Ms. Bharati Trivedi

### Realism

Realism is aimed to achieve power, it is state centric study of an International System. Any state when adopts a realist perspective, she would focus on various aspects of power at domestic level. Here, the Self-analysis is the basic point for the states to understand the relative power it possesses and the power she is expecting to increase. Power could be in terms of economy, political, military, cultural, technological, etc.

When a Self-analysis is done, certain aspects as described above are observed closely. This observation leads to a pragmatic judgement and that can further help in enhancing the various powers by different foreign and domestic policies. Realism is a perspective having offensive and defensive approaches. When a state is weaker in some aspects, its approach is offensive,

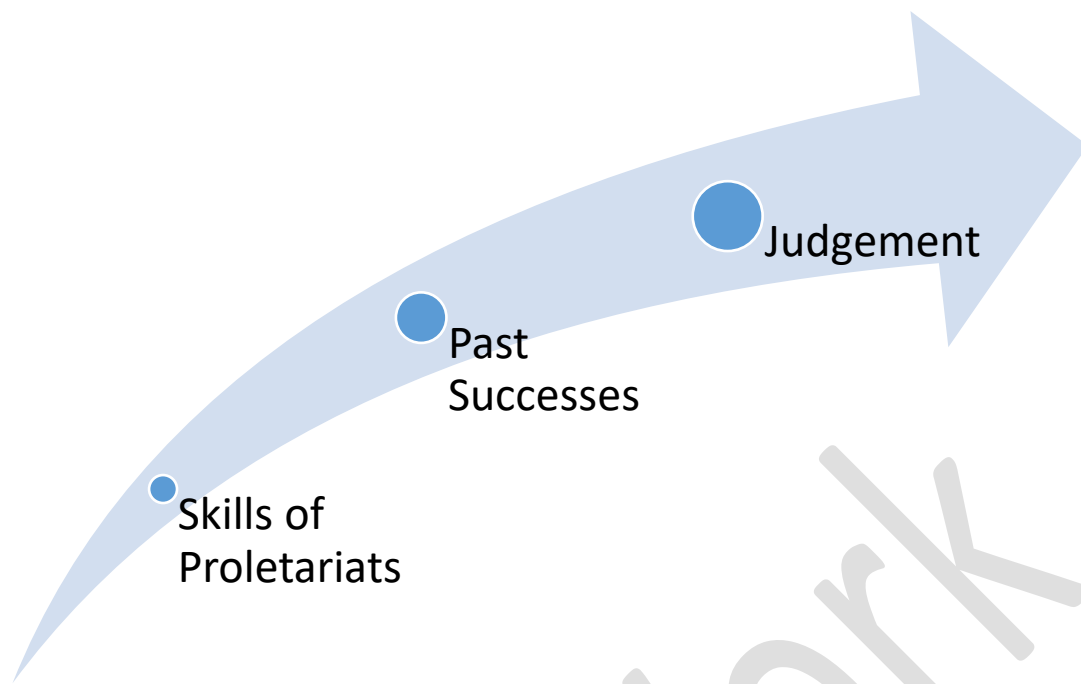
however, when the power is enhanced, the state adopts defensive approach. The enhancement of power depends on its internal strength.



Consequently, realist focuses on the citizens of the state and tries to encourage them to improve their capabilities. This can further result in the overall enhancement of power of any state. Hence the basic step in order to take any decision is the self-analysis that further leads to the minute observation which helps in taking a decision and reaching a judgment. With the increase or decrease in one's capabilities, states may change their policies.

### Marxism

Marxism is another major perspective of International Relations in order to view events. Karl Marx's theory got various versions and was practically adopted by the states. Mao-Tse-Tung was the prominent leader of China. He has interpreted Marxism in terms of converting all the people belonging to major profession as proletariats. Based on the skills of proletariats and the past success that was seen in U.S.S.R was a kind of motivation for the states that adopt Communism as a nature of the state. Based on both the aspects, a judgement is taken on which these states establish relations with various actors in the International System.

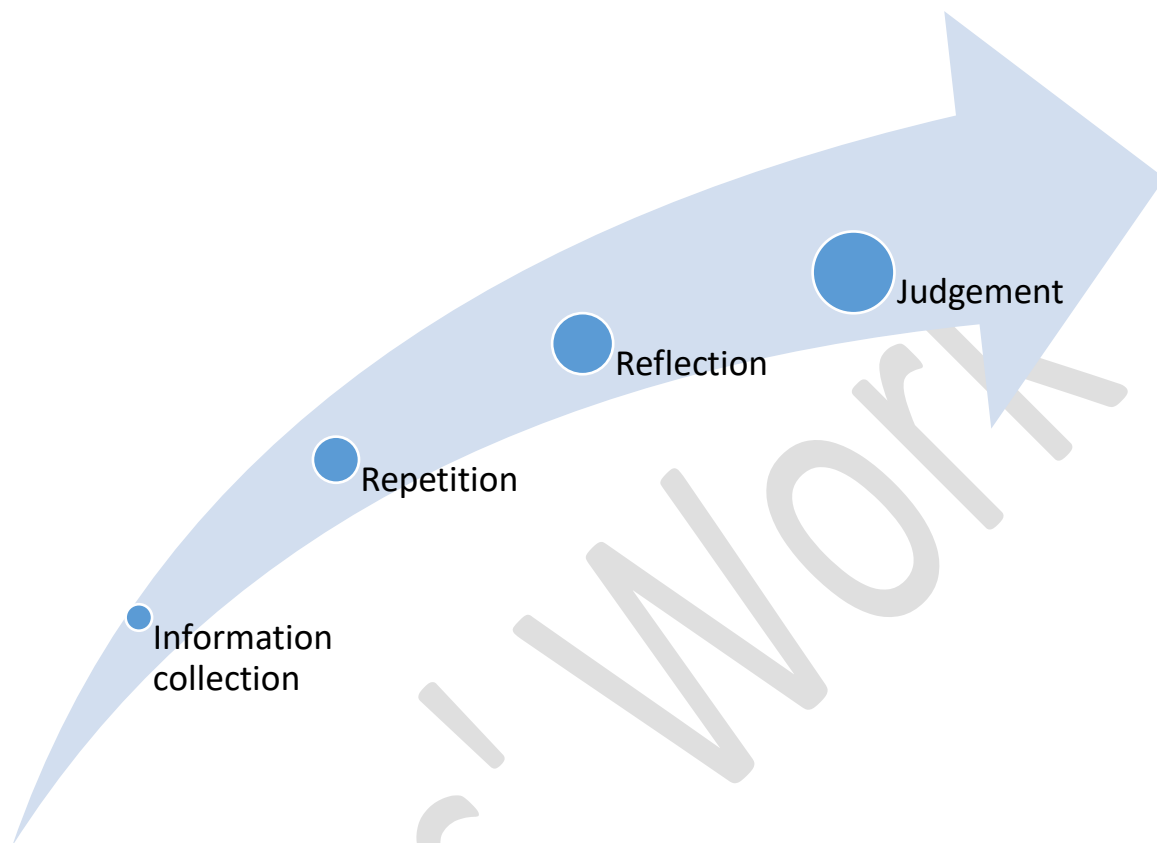


Consequently, the actors that have adopted any one of the three major perspectives can reach to a judgement through a process. Once they are able to make a judgment, they are able to interact with other actors confidently and hence their foreign policies may get successful. However, the world is dynamic, each particle is moving and so there is a wide scope for a change in the foreign policy whenever the changes take place at the domestic level.

Once any actor has gone through this process and reaches the level of a judgment which is again prone to change.

#### Parity Vision of Ved Vyas

Parity Vision of Maharishi Ved Vyas is about gaining knowledge with scientific approach towards a goal of attaining humanity. Knowledge is at its centre. In International Relations an actor has to keep relations with other actors. For that, an actor should have *sraddha* or judgement of how to delineate a foreign policy and implement it. The process of this parity vision begins with collecting the information by five sense organs as discussed in the internal sources of knowledge. This information is further repeated and reflected upon. Then a judgement is taken which can lead to gain knowledge and make the implementation of policy successful. As the decision is taken after reflecting upon the information collected, the judgement taken can lead to success of the implementation of the policies adopted.



In order to gain knowledge, ‘Sravanam’ listening is an important sense organ that is useful in remembering and collecting information. This information is further repeated in mind in order to have clarity about policy that is delineated. Then it is reflected with the help of concentrating on its positive and negative outcomes and then one takes a judgement. “This firm knowledge comes through *sravanam*, *mananam*, and *nididhyasanam*.” (Viditatmananda, Mandukya Upanisad, 2019)

## Conclusion

In this piece of work, the Concept of Sraddha has been studied as a process to convert the thoughts into actions. It can be considered as a path. This is possible with all the actors with

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various different perspectives by reaching a judgement through a particular process. Sraddha is a rational process which acts as a catalytic agent in conversion of thoughts into actions.

There is further scope to study the Concept of Sraddha in order to understand the events empirically. With the new Concept, the existing concepts such as peace, power, freedom etc., can be discussed and establish relations with each in depth.

Sraddha is mentioned in scriptures and so is studied by the Mumukshu (seeker of Self-Knowledge). Consequently, the works cited are of the spiritual teachers. The drawback of this piece is that the Western scholars who have worked on this line so far are not cited. However, most of the scholars have written on Trust or Faith which is generally understood and used for the term Sraddha. Here, the whole idea is different. It is neither studied as trust nor as faith. However, it is considered as a process that makes things happen.

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