INDIA'S SOFT POWER IMAGE: A NAGA PERSPECTIVE

SHONREIPHY LONGVAH

Department of Political Science, North-Eastern Hill University, Nagaland, India

ABSTRACT

Soft power as a concept is a very new phenomenon in the realm of sovereign state politics, popularized by Joseph Nye in the 1990s. Thence on, scholars, intellectuals and academicians have been making a serious effort to understand the enigmatic concept of power from various dimensions. Today, soft power is known by multiple names – attractive power, pull power, co-optive power, incentive power, gentle power, etc. The policy of soft power does not limit itself within the ambit of international relations. It is porous in the sense that the concept can also be used by a sovereign state in its dealing with internal problems. In order to leverage her soft power image, India must first efficiently demonstrate its sensitivity and capability in dealing with the prevailing various domestic issues. For instance, the Indian Government, can for a change employ more of soft power and less of hard power while dealing with the Naga peoples' movement for independence. In fact, in Nagaland, New Delhi had made use of 'soft power' concomitantly with 'hard power'. These two terms were more commonly understood by the Nagas as the 'carrot and stick' policy of the Central Government of India. The following theoretical research paper argues that of all the soft power resources that India possesses the culture of accommodating diversity acts as the most appealing pull factor. It also pontificates the importance of upholding the unique nature of maintaining harmony amidst diversity so as to strengthen India's soft power image globally as well as locally. Apropos to this, this article also makes an effort to theorise that the protracted Naga political conflict can find the most amiable solution in the spirit of plurality and also in examining it from the angle of soft power.

KEYWORDS: Conflict, Diversity, Foreign Policy, Nagas, Narendra Modi, Peace, Soft power, Tolerance