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ABSTRACT

Security in the contemporary context is a contested concept. There is increasing acceptance that the state-centric paradigm, which defined security purely in relation to military preparedness and force, is outmoded. The conventional notions of security are therefore juxtaposed with non-military, comprehensive security studies including challenges like social security, economic security, environmental security, food security and “**Energy Security**”. The priorities of these studies have increasingly come to be focused on the Third World, especially countries like China and India. India’s economic and social development is deeply linked to its struggle to ensure energy security. The pace of economic growth has been rising over the decades. With this, the demand for energy has also been on the rise. Today India ranks sixth in the world, in terms of energy demand, accounting for 3.5% of the world energy. By the first half of the 21st century, India is expected to be one of the top five consumers of petroleum products.

West Asia’s location as India’s extended neighbourhood has significant overtones for the country’s strategic planning. Presence of huge amounts of oil & natural gas makes the

region strategically very important for India. Developments in the region, naturally, have a direct bearing on India's economy as well as national security. Indian consumption of oil & gas is expected to increase dramatically in the coming years, and so would India's dependent on imports. "Energy Security" is therefore a vital issue in the context of dependence on imported energy and the localisation of supplies in the Persian Gulf. The research study has analysed Indian foreign policy and energy security implications with special reference to the West Asian region. A modest attempt has been made to delineate the changing dynamics of West Asia and their impact on Indian energy security. The thesis draws the conclusion that India's energy security requires maintenance of friendly ties with the West Asian oil and natural gas producers, and necessitates constant monitoring of the West Asian geo-politics and internal dynamics. Some of the important findings were as follows:

- Skewed reliance on West Asia
- More than 60% proven oil reserves in West Asia
- Hence efforts towards diversifying sources
- Has initiated the tapping of alternative sources
- Increased search for overseas oil equity
- Upsurge of diplomatic endeavors towards West Asia
- On the path of deregulating the oil sector

Hence the thesis focuses on the need to work afresh on the discourse on West Asian (energy) security. This makes it imperative for India to re-visit the Indo-West Asian relations with a will to build newer linkages on the economic and diplomatic fronts. This can go a long way in easing out from the present energy (security-insecurity) quagmire.