

India's Covid Digital Diplomacy: An Effect on International Relations

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Abstract— The impact of India's digital diplomacy during the COVID-19 epidemic on global relations is examined in this research study. The study, which employed a descriptive and exploratory method, finds that India's digital diplomacy improved its connections with important partner countries and international organizations as well as its worldwide image. It describes the many strategies used, such as the dispersal of factual information, the supply of medical help, and the encouragement of universal solidarity. Nevertheless, issues like the digital divide and false information started to surface. India's digital diplomacy drew various reactions from its neighbors, which was indicative of the complexity of the area. The study highlights the rising significance of digital diplomacy in today's international politics and guides decision-makers in responding to global crises.

Index Terms— India; Digital Diplomacy; COVID-19 pandemic; International Relations; Global Image; Diplomacy Tactics.

I. INTRODUCTION

Recent technological developments have had a significant impact on international relations and diplomatic behavior. In light of this, it is no longer as important to define power as the combination of economic might and military force. The techniques and tactics for employing digital technologies more successfully are quickly changing as they grow more widespread and are taken up by more and more state and non-state entities [1]. As a result, the relevance and significance of the digital component of soft power increases. Its significance and possibilities for conveying messages to audiences are apparent in the sphere of diplomacy [2].

The technique of using digital communication tools by diplomats to engage with the public and other diplomats is known as “digital diplomacy.” Digital and networked technology like “the internet, mobile devices, and social media” platforms are just a few examples of what may be utilized for this communication. It is a method for managing change that makes use of digital tools and online partnerships [3]. It has been referred to informally as “e-diplomacy” or even “diplomacy 2.0” [4]. However, many governments throughout the globe have different definitions of it. For instance, the United States of America refers to it as “21st Century Statecraft” [5], the United Kingdom refers to it as “digital diplomacy,” and Canada refers to it as “Open Policy.”

Public diplomacy and soft power discussions rarely address how digital diplomacy can build global ecosystem trust. Traditional diplomacy should not be replaced by digital diplomacy. It should complement and coexist with diplomatic channels. Scholars and practitioners have interpreted digital diplomacy differently, so there is no standard definition or framework [6]. Traditional diplomacy using various tools and platforms continues. States can interact with civil society creatively using digital diplomacy. Since technology increases participation, Nicholas Westcott claims it has helped some nations become more democratic [7]. Digital diplomacy is criticized. Richard Grant (2004) claims that exponential civil society growth has changed involvement norms [8].

Several issues have arisen as a result of the increased use of digital technology in diplomatic settings, including information leaking and Internet user anonymity. There has been a push toward the emergence of online anonymity, where anybody may adopt any persona, as is the case on Twitter, Instagram, or LinkedIn [9]. Whistleblowing and internet outlets continue to provide difficulties. The Wikileaks dump from 2010 is still one of the most well-known incidents in recent memory. The State Department in Washington and 250,000 diplomatic cables from US embassies across the world were released by Wikileaks. It led to pandemonium spreading among foreign ministries throughout the world, according to Ilan Manor [10]. Indecent criticism of other international leaders, other nations, and even the host nation of the embassy was contained in the cables. The nation-brand of the US was subsequently impacted by this.

In the domains of international and diplomatic relations, digital abilities are among the most in-demand [11]. However, the issue of how nations might increase confidence through the use of digital instruments persists. Using social media, world leaders and diplomats may communicate and interact with the audience they want to impact. Donald Trump, a former US president, is a perfect example of how to do this by making Twitter a key component of his engagement approach.

Internet tools have also been used more and more to support diplomatic efforts. According to Nikos Christodoulides, many nations view the internet and social media as unique diplomatic tools. In this sense, nation-states may promote themselves in many ways, which also gives them more influence over how their ideals are communicated to the general public. It enables nation-states to communicate ideas, beliefs, and values quickly and easily at the press of a button [2].

The Digitalization of Diplomacy and COVID-19

One of the main ways the nation promotes itself to the world and improves its reputation is through diplomatic communication. In this regard, propaganda, lobbying, and public relations are crucial. By using these techniques, states may express themselves, defend their interests, and even settle disputes in real or virtual spaces. In the modern state communications conducted in the digital environment, in particular, perform a few functions. Digital diplomacy initiatives are one of the strategies utilized to achieve this goal. Digital diplomacy, broadly defined, is the application of modern information and communication technologies, such as the Internet, to international relations [12]. Another definition of digital diplomacy is the management of global change by state and non-state actors using social media and video conferencing using information communication technology [7].

The use of new algorithms in digital diplomacy requires rethinking geopolitics, system sovereignty, and international relations. Although social media platforms are often used in “digital diplomacy,” nations can still conduct diplomatic operations using the internet or other ICT [13]. COVID-19 highlighted existing trends and problems while escalating geopolitical tendencies. The pandemic was followed by an “infodemic”, in which both sides threatened each other on social media amid rising US-China tensions.

The epidemic and Chinese commitments were utilized in the West to lessen China's influence and slow down its rise to become a major international power. To reclaim its power, China has also engaged in “mask diplomacy” by selling medical goods to other countries. Before the crisis, ambassadors employed new technology naively and half-heartedly, and for the majority of them, it did not extend beyond the odd tweets or Facebook postings. COVID-19 altered everything when the unanticipated prospect of infection made it impossible for diplomats and statesmen to engage face-to-face [14]. Summits and conferences had to use video conferencing, but commercial programs like Zoom were deemed hazardous for formal events. Government institutions that are even more guarded have gotten clumsy and prevented natural discussion. In this process, the majority were convinced of the limitations of the digitization of diplomacy and they optimistically awaited the return of normalcy.

Although COVID-19 marked the pinnacle of this process, concentration had been underway for the majority of the previous ten years. Obama's election campaign success was aided by Twitter, demonstrating the importance of the digital environment for diplomacy. Finally, digital diplomacy affects global order. Robotization and artificial intelligence have opened the door to a post-human era with many risks and issues. Assessing whether societies should rule systems or systems should manage societies is also necessary. Due to COVID-19's rapid spread, the broad definition of digital diplomacy will become more common in international relations, even though the concept of digital inside digital diplomacy is constantly evolving. New digital diplomacy will grow as its definition evolves based on computational algorithmic order [14].

Digital Diplomacy and Social Media Adoption During COVID-19

Maintaining, comprehending, and improving international relations are delicate arts that need diplomacy [15]. The only factor in international affairs is diplomacy. It is the established practice by which states establish their foreign policy objectives and coordinate their efforts to persuade other governments and peoples to act in certain ways—other than via war and violence—by communication, negotiation, and other similar measures.

In other words, it refers to the established tactics employed by countries to safeguard particular or general interests, such as the easing of tensions within or between them. It is the main instrument for carrying out the goals, schemes, and overall strategies of foreign policy. Digital diplomacy is the application of conventional diplomacy via the use of social media [16]. The way things are done has changed as the digital era steadily takes hold [17]. Public diplomacy is typically considered to be a part of digital diplomacy. It comprises the use of social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Weibo by nations to participate in communication with the global public, often in an affordable fashion [18]. The following diplomatic elements are constantly at play in diplomatic interactions, according to theories of diplomacy.

In the upcoming era of diplomacy, which is referred to as hybrid diplomacy, it is hoped that real-world and virtual interactions may combine, grow, and strengthen each other [19]. Over two years ago, the COVID-19 outbreak pushed diplomacy to go online for the first time. As of March 2020, multilateral organizations (MFAs) and diplomats were subject to social isolation and quarantine, and MFAs had to shut their doors [20]. The process appears to have gone very smoothly in retrospect, despite how rapid the transition was [21]. SMEs affected by the COVID-19 problem had a high knowledge of social media and a strong propensity to embrace it as a medium for promoting their products and communicating with consumers, according to a survey by [22,23].

Use of Social Media in Digital and Public Diplomacy

It was not surprising to see public diplomacy go digital. Both in our daily lives and diplomatic procedures, communication technology has always been utilized [24]. The most recent installment of this narrative links diplomatic procedures to internet communication channels [25]. According to this viewpoint, the author anticipates that digitalization will alter the information-relaying pathways, the languages and semiotics functions that are now in use, as well as the overall communication environment [26]. The dissemination of public diplomacy messages should be seen as a platform for digital platforms [27].

Diplomats are realizing that international audiences are watching their signals. These messages can influence behavior using popular soft power assets. As an extension of the digitization thesis, new platforms may change power dynamics and player interactions. Since Covid-19, states have been using social media to clarify laws, provide information, and promote healthy behavior. Although some of these communications may not be intended for outside audiences, social media information is accessible to everyone. Governments use soft power by telling stories to promote their advantages [28].

Their Covid-19 public health strategy is strong. Countries could present COVID-19 and their responses in a way that best reflected their own stories. Two public diplomacy features distinguish such tales. Public diplomacy is official self-representation, so practitioner nations introduce themselves first [29]. View digital platform communications as public opinion-sharing. Second, tales may include more players or attempts by nations to represent other nations [30]. Thus, the digital tales reference other participants as well as themselves [31].

Digital Diplomacy and International Relations

Diplomacy has existed for an extended period before its formal designation. Diplomacy is the act of negotiating between parties to accomplish goals. Nations employ diplomacy as a tool to enforce their national interests and manage their interactions with one another in the context of international affairs. The international system provides a variety of incentives for governments to collaborate [4]. The realist theory of international relations posits that states desire security and power within the global system. States form alliances to safeguard their interests and to establish strategic partnerships with one another to accrue power and security. As a result, governments are motivated to engage in diplomacy by their fragility, desire for power, shared interests with other states, and understanding of the advantages of commerce [13].

Governments frequently engage in diplomacy for their self-interests; however, the world has reaped significant benefits from this practice. Diplomacy has been frequently implemented in the past to address global concerns, increase commerce, and prevent war and violence. In the absence of diplomacy, governments in the international system would be compelled to employ less peaceful methods, a lack of communication, and uncompromising behavior to achieve their objectives [14].

Diplomacy takes many forms, including diplomatic missions. Embassies handle bilateral issues and strengthen ties between their home countries and their hosts. Embassies can handle international affairs diplomatically by ensuring the host country tolerates them

and does not interfere with their sovereignty. First, diplomats promote their country's interests [3]. Conversations with local governments help diplomats express their interests abroad. The embassy's country may benefit from government policies if the two nations share interests. Finding out about the nation's interests and reporting on them makes up the next part of the task [32].

In that nation, ministries use this data to determine foreign policy. Before deciding, politicians will consider these foreign policy ideas. Then, embassies use diplomacy to improve political, economic, and cultural relations between nations. By helping two countries establish study-abroad programs, diplomatic missions improve their relationship [33]. To encourage travel, consulates abroad grant tourists visas and inform them about local events. Ambassadors discuss with other nations to strengthen their relationship [34].

To examine India's COVID digital diplomacy and its influence on international relations, the study further frames research questions and objectives to accomplish the study goals, followed by a discussion of methodology in the next sections. The study then delves into the result part which demonstrates the findings of India's digital diplomacy efforts on international relations, presenting case studies and findings based on the chosen methodology. The paper concludes with the implications of the study.

Research Questions

- How has India's use of digital diplomacy in the COVID-19 pandemic affected its relationships with major partner nations and international organizations? What were India's digital diplomacy tactics throughout the pandemic?
- What were the challenges and limitations that India faced in implementing digital diplomacy during the pandemic, and how did these affect its international relations?
- Did India's COVID digital diplomacy efforts strengthen its relationships with neighboring countries, and what were the key factors contributing to these outcomes?

Objectives

- To find out how India's use of digital diplomacy in the COVID-19 pandemic affected its relationships with major partner nations and international organizations.
- To find out India's various digital diplomacy tactics throughout the pandemic.
- To find out the challenges and limitations that India faced in implementing digital diplomacy during the pandemic, and how did these affect its international relations.
- To find out whether India's COVID digital diplomacy efforts strengthened its relationships with neighboring countries.

II. METHODOLOGY

The impact of India's COVID digital diplomacy on international relations is investigated in this study using a descriptive and exploratory methodology. The study gathered information from sources including official Twitter accounts, Statista government publications, and public remarks made by diplomats and government officials. The collection and dissemination of factual data and statistics about India's digital diplomacy activities during the epidemic is part of the methodology's descriptive component. To get a clearer understanding of how digital diplomacy impacted India's foreign relations during the COVID-19 issue, the exploratory component concentrates on analyzing this data to find trends, patterns, and insights. Assorted data has been obtained through various government reports, newspapers, magazines, etc.

III. RESULT

India's Use of Digital Diplomacy in the COVID-19 Pandemic and its Relationships with Major Partner Nations and International Organizations

Unusual reactions to international emergencies have frequently permanently altered future directions for nations. Due to the asymmetrical nature of the international equilibrium of authority, Western countries spearheaded by the United States (US), have historically provided the vast majority of solutions to most global crises. These asymmetries have been readjusting for at least two decades, though, as a result of Asian nations like China and India's ascent and expansion into new spheres of the world's power. As a result, although still frequently only reflected regionally, their reactions to global crises have altered dramatically during the past 20 years. One such instance is the current COVID-19 pandemic, which will serve as a benchmark for how governments will be judged in the future based on how they responded to a similar global emergency. Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic is probable to act as a definite dividing line between two eras of time. Asian countries will take the lead in the crisis-response dichotomy concerning future global crises, which were formerly controlled by Western countries.

On April 4, "the Directorate General of Foreign Trade" prohibited the export of HCQ. Later, the government decided to give HCQ and paracetamol and lifted the restriction. Following Donald Trump's warning that India would face backlash if it opted not to provide the US with the medications, India agreed to relax the embargo. This gave rise to considerable conjecture over the condition of US-Indian ties. However, the judgment to lift the embargo on India has been interpreted in light of its internal analyses of possible national requirements and available materials. India generates "more than 70% of the HCQs" used worldwide [35]. 32 nations have already received aid from India in the form of "28 lakh HCQ and 13 lakh paracetamol pills." Additionally, 42 nations are receiving commercial medicine supplies from the United States [36]. For instance, while India has previously approved "530 kg of HCQ for shipment to Brazil, an additional 5 million tablets of HCQ" have been made commercially available to Brazil [37].

In his speech to the country on April 9, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the people of India for their prompt assistance provided to the Brazilian people through the shipment of "HCQ from India to Brazil" [38]. Additionally, India has maintained a balance between big and small nations. For example, "the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India pulled out all stops" [39] to supply 2,00,000 HCQ tablets when the Dominican Republic requested them on March 25 (concurrent accreditation) at the Indian Embassy in Cuba. The Economic Times 2020 reports that on April 26th, Hans Dannenberg Castellanos, the Dominican Republic's ambassador to India, joined other nations in praising the MEA for helping with both the rapid supply of medical supplies and the evacuation of foreign citizens [40,41].

There are two other, more comprehensive circumstances for India's decision to relax the export restriction on pharmaceuticals. First, offering medical assistance to governments throughout the world strengthens India's soft power at a time when the epidemic itself has demonstrated little regard for national boundaries. Second, India's prompt assistance to the US should be viewed from the perspective of potential future confirmation from the US "about India's export grants to its manufacturers of metallic goods,

medications, chemicals, etc., which were questioned by the US at the World Trade Organization (WTO) as being harmful to American workers and manufacturers” [35]. In addition to other possible gains, India may approach the US to request the removal of certain of the WTO rules that were a point of conflict between the two countries.

Another example of how India's neighboring diplomacy is focused on friendliness is the COVID-19 outbreak. It turned out to be a chance for India to improve its regional diplomacy as well. “On April 22, India donated Nepal 23 tons of essential pharmaceuticals to help the nation combat the coronavirus epidemic. This cargo included 8.25 lakh doses of essential drugs, 2.5 lakh doses of HCQ, 3.2 lakh doses of paracetamol, and 3.2 lakh doses of paracetamol.” Nepal's prime minister, K.P. Sharma Oli, personally thanked India for their assistance [42]. India has previously sent Bangladesh 15,000 head coverings and 30,000 surgical masks on March 25 [43]. In response, India gave Bangladesh 50,000 pairs of medical gloves and 1 lakh HCQ anti-malarial pills [44], even as the number of cases increased in Bangladesh.

During its presence in the Maldives, India provided a total of 317 cartons, weighing over 5.5 tons, containing critical medications. India has also dispatched pharmaceuticals to several countries, including “Afghanistan, Myanmar, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka.” Notably, a plane carrying a substantial quantity of medicine, amounting to 10 tons, was sent to Sri Lanka. India has sent quick reaction squads to “Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka.” In the case of Maldives, a team consisting of 14 members was dispatched to provide fast-reaction assistance in establishing laboratory facilities. Additionally, a separate team of 15 healthcare professionals from the Army was deployed to Kuwait. Furthermore, in early April, the Indian Air Force fleet was mobilized to facilitate the transportation of vital equipment and medications.

Additionally, a minimum of two warships have been prepared for prompt disposition in both India's urgent vicinity and its expanded surrounding areas [45]. “These actions follow a SAARC-level initiative launched by PM Modi to engage with all regional countries and establish a \$10 million SAARC fund for usage by the member states.” Seven member nations have committed a total of \$21.8 million to the SAARC emergency fund. Except for Pakistan, all SAARC countries have hurried to fulfill their contributions to the emergency fund, and India has already given member states relief supplies totaling \$1.7 million [46].

In addition to medicinal and digital diplomacy, India used “the COVID-19 crisis” to grasp other nations, evacuate its citizens, aid in the evacuation of foreign nationals from India, and feed pandemic-stricken nations. India has promised Kenya commercial and non-commercial goods, including medical supplies. With constant tweets, “External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar” has assured several nations of medical supplies and other aid. His Twitter account shows that he has spoken with people from “Argentina, Mali, Uganda, Comoros, Burkina Faso, the Dominican Republic, Seychelles, Jamaica, the Marshall Islands, Jordan, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Estonia, Israel, Panama, Peru, Brazil, Russia, the Czech Republic, and the United States.”

In addition, 90 tons of medical supplies and safety equipment were also shipped to Serbia. The supply of wheat to Afghanistan, cooperation with Tehran in the rescue of Indians who became stranded in Iran, and a pledge to Malaysia to supply anti-malarial drugs, which helped to smooth over the strained relationship before the COVID-19 outbreak, are some of the highlights of India's diplomatic efforts during the pandemic. India could send aid to Afghanistan with ease thanks to the Chabahar port. The Indian Embassy in Kabul made the following statement about this via a social media post [47]. 251 containers carrying the first shipment of 5,022 MT of wheat, out of a total donation of 75,000 MT of wheat from India to Afghanistan, left the Kandla Port for the Chabahar Port. India is giving Afghanistan 5,000,000 pills of hydroxychloroquine for medical staff and COVID-19-positive patients.

India's Various Digital Diplomacy Tactics Throughout the Pandemic

A far what is immediately apparent, is that “the Indian embassies” across the world have engaged in active diplomatic initiatives to guarantee the return of the troubled citizens and their safety in their current positions. This was accomplished by sending cautions, setting up “emergency helplines, and providing online forms for Indian” individuals who were stranded to notify the embassies and receive assurances of their safety. “Indian embassies in Canada, Greece, Finland and Estonia, Israel, Japan, Vietnam, Bulgaria and North Macedonia, Russia, Cuba, Brazil, Iran, and Switzerland” in particular were in charge of these activities [48,49].

Because of transportation restraints “in three Brazilian cities, Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, and Sao Paulo, the Indian embassy in Brasilia” enlisted the help of regional Indian restaurants and hotels to offer low-cost lodging and Indian cuisine for trapped Indians. Since April 18, “the Indian embassy in Brazil” has also been providing live online yoga courses. These kinds of initiatives have proven more difficult in nations with sizable Indian populations. That covers the majority of Gulf nations. For instance, the embassy in Oman's capital, Muscat, has set up 24-hour helplines and a network of social workers and supermarket chains to provide food to hungry Indian residents across the whole nation [50]. More than 2,000 Indian citizens have already received assistance from it. “The Indian Embassy in the UAE” took a much-applauded move, offering alternate housing for COVID-19-confirmed patients and caring for expats without access to food and medicine [51].

“The Indian PM and External Affairs Minister speak by phone with their counterparts in over 50 countries.” India has also updated Indo-Pacific nations on epidemic response measures weekly by phone. India meets monthly with Indo-Pacific nations to share vaccine research, help stranded nationals, and revive the global economy [52,53]. “The Serum Institute of India” is 1 of 7 international organizations producing “the vaccine” with “Oxford University”. The government asserts that “Remdesivir, a promising cure” for COVID-19, is being developed in India in collaboration with international laboratories [54]. The COVID-19 pandemic has positioned India as a regional and global leader. India may spearhead medical, humanitarian, and disaster relief efforts as global objectives are attained. During the recent G20 summit, various nations endorsed India's proposal for reforming the WHO [55]. The global community acknowledges its regional leadership. The diplomacy surrounding COVID-19 has established India as a dependable and accountable global power. India's reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic could irrevocably alter its path as a regional and global power. [56].

India's COVID Digital Diplomacy Efforts to Strengthen its Relationships with Neighboring Countries

Out of the 193 UN members 189 states were represented by the governments and leaders of nations, according to the 2020 edition. Twitter is used by 132 foreign ministers, 163 heads of state and government, and other high-ranking officials. 189 nations had official accounts on Twitter in 2020, either personal or corporate accounts managed “by heads of state and government and foreign ministries.” Donald Trump, the president of the United States, was rated top during the measurement period with almost “81.1 million followers” on Twitter. “The official @POTUS account,” which has 30.2 million followers globally, was rated sixth. Twitter allows users to engage in a very public way and is a very conversational social media network. Government officials are urged to engage with the public on Twitter, which is used by foreign ministries to increase their online visibility and digital diplomatic networks. The

Government of Nepal is the international leader who engages in the most discussion on Twitter, with @replies making up 96% of their tweets.

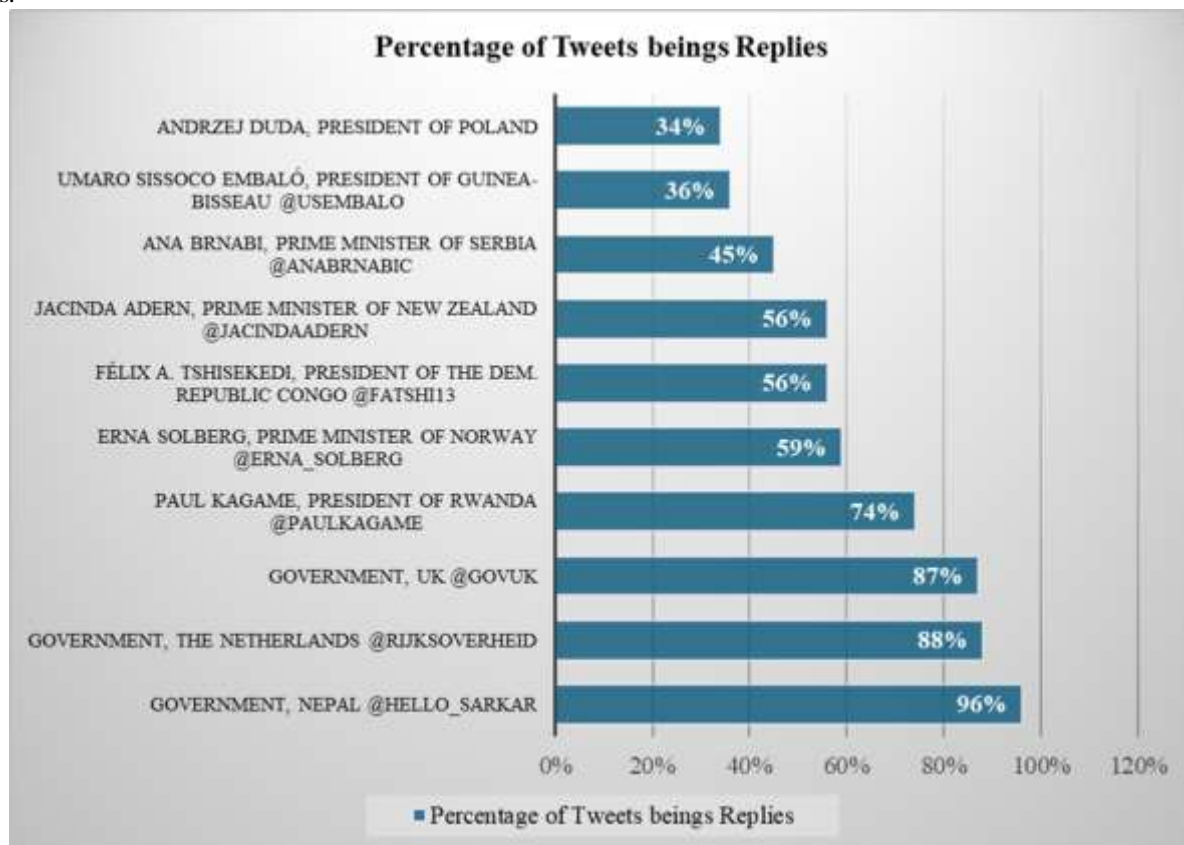


Figure 1: World leaders with the most Twitter followers as of June 2020.

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/281375/heads-of-state-with-the-most-twitter-followers/>

Another more covert aspect of Twitter diplomacy is the mutual following of peers between official heads of state, ministers, and other government accounts. “As of June 2020, the Foreign Ministry of Iceland (@MFAIceland) was ranked first with 147 reciprocal connections with other world leaders and foreign ministries. The @realDonaldTrump, @POTUS, and @WhiteHouse Twitter accounts did not follow any other foreign heads of state throughout the measurement period.” Only 59 reciprocal peer connections were made by the U.S. State Department account in 2018, which paints a sparse picture of global political discussions [57].

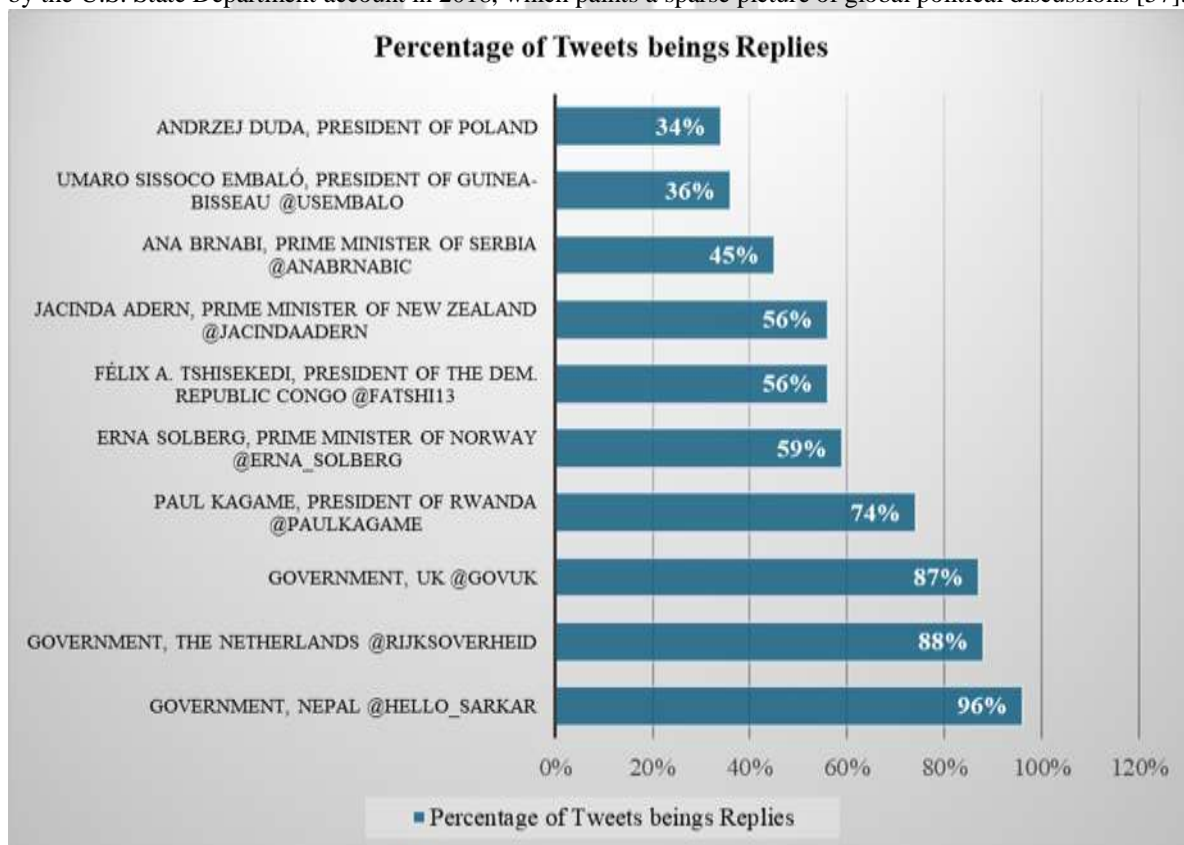


Figure 2: World leaders and foreign ministries with the most mutual Twitter connections as of June 2020.

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/348469/world-leaders-with-the-most-twitter-mutual-connections/>

In June 2020, “the Icelandic Foreign Ministry” demonstrated a high level of connectivity, as it reciprocally followed 147 foreign ministries and world leaders on the social media platform, Twitter. The EU External Action Service achieved the second position in terms of mutual Twitter relationships, totaling 145 [58].

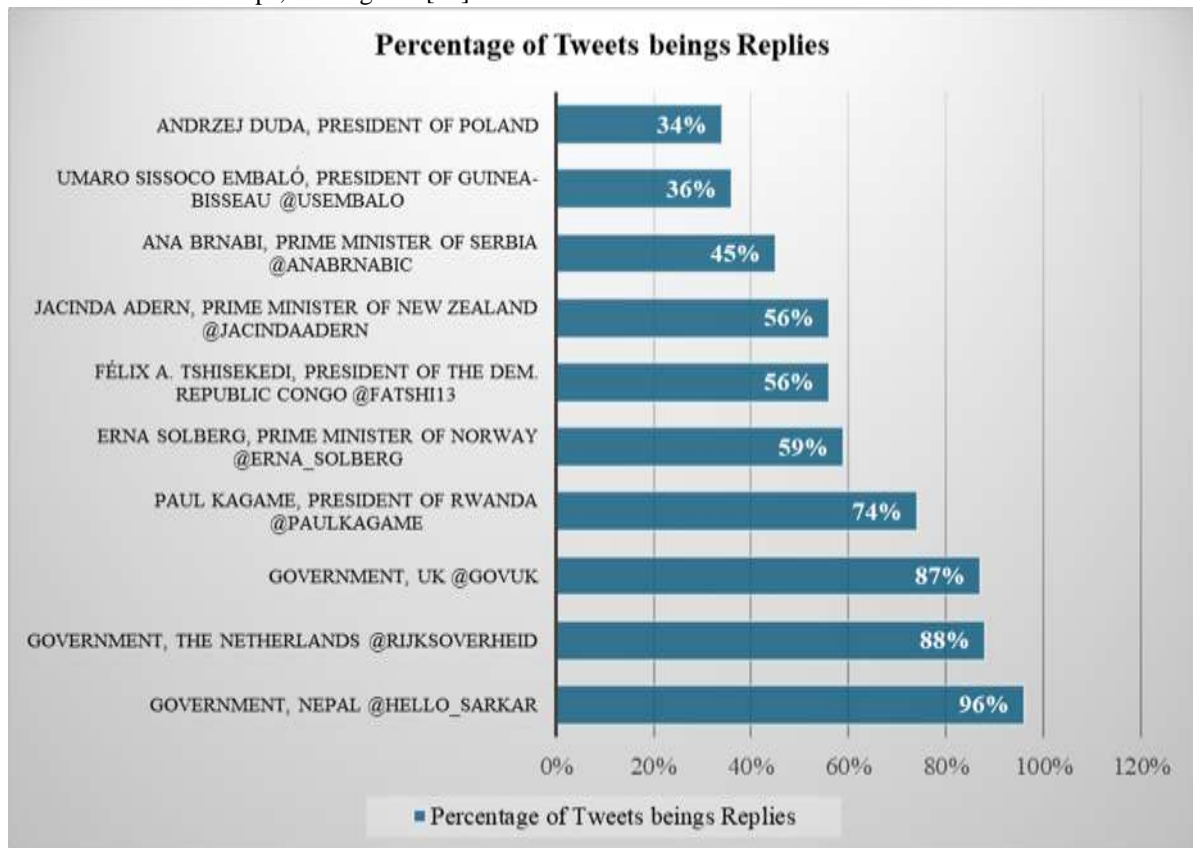


Figure 3: World Leaders with Highest Twitter Reply Rates 2020.

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/348481/world-leaders-with-the-highest-twitter-reply-rates/>

As of June 2020, the Twitter account affiliated with the Nepalese Government had the highest level of responsiveness and activity among “world leader” accounts on “social media” platforms. Over the noted period, it was found that “96% of their tweets” consisted of @replies, which were responses to inquiries posed by other users on the Twitter platform [59].

Narendra Modi, India's prime minister, on Twitter

The analysis focuses on tweets from March 18 to June 1, 2020, as there are limits on accessing older tweets. Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, currently boasts a substantial following of 59.2 million individuals. This places him in the second position on the Diplomacy's 50 Most Followed World Leaders ranking as of July 1, 2020 (The 50 Most Followed World Leaders, 2020) [60]. Interestingly, the number of accounts that he follows exceeds that of the other two actors, totaling 2,356. Since January 2009, he has been consistently posting tweets on his highly engaged Twitter account.

Table 1: General Twitter Account Trends for Narendra Modi.

General Information on the Account	General Outcomes about the Substance of the Tweets
Member since Jan 2009	Hashtags, mentions, photos, videos, video and web-page links- a wide range of interaction methods
59.2 million followers	A tool to inform the public and a way for knowledge management
2,356 followings	Intra-state communication, announcements, “address to the nation” speeches
2nd on the “The 50 Most Followed Leaders” ranking on Diplomacy	Birthday messages, congratulatory messages,
Linked to his webpage	Sincere language
515 tweets in English, 1 tweet in Russian, and the rest in Hindi out of 638 tweets	Human dignity, women empowerment, COVID-19, calls for international cooperation
226 tweets with photos out of 638 tweets	Tweets with #IndiaFightsCorona hashtag
145 tweets with videos out of 638 tweets	Sharing every kind of interaction with the leaders of foreign countries
8 retweets out of 638 tweets	Emphasize the notions of “cultural ties, historical links, well-being, harmony, and prosperity.”

Source: URCAN, C. (2021)[60].

When viewing his account's home page, it is apparent that a webpage is linked on the bio-side. His website may be located here, where you can read in-depth details of his activities. Mr. Narendra Modi utilizes both Hindi and English on his account. The time frame for analysis is from March 18 through June 1, 2020, a total of 76 days. He is a leader who employs various forms of interaction on Twitter, including videos, hashtags, links to videos and websites, mentions, and retweets, with remarkable effectiveness and efficiency. During this period, 638 tweets were dispatched, of which 8 were retweets from other accounts. The retweets originated from multiple sources. Only 515 of these tweets were composed in English; the rest were articulated in regional languages. Remarkably, one tweet was composed in Russian.

Several tweets were written in both the native language and English. The presence of multiple shared films on Mr. Modi's account is another significant aspect. After a succinct elucidation of the issue, he disseminated multiple videos, some comprising solely his narration and others incorporating supplementary material. These videos feature numerous "address to the nation" speeches. Of the 638 tweets, 145 contain videos. A multitude of videos is included. He has contributed numerous images along with several videos, combining 226 out of 638. [60].

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the president of the Turkish Republic, on Twitter

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the president of the Turkish Republic, is ranked seventh on Diplomacy's list of the 50 most popular world leaders for 2020 (The 50 Most Followed World Leaders). Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who is also the chairman of the AK Party, has been the president of Turkey since August 2009, and as of the beginning of July 2020, he has 16.3 million followers on his official Twitter account. Additionally, he follows 95 accounts in total [60].

TABLE 2: GENERAL TWITTER TRENDS FOR RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN.

General Information on the Account	General Outcomes about the Substance of the Tweets
Member since August 2009	Non-discriminative and humanitarian messages to the international community
16.3 million followers	Calls to the international community to fight against terrorism
95 followings	Press conferences and opening ceremonies
7th on the "The 50 Most Followed Leaders" ranking on Diplomacy	Condolence to historical, political, and sportive figures
294 original tweets out of 341 tweets	Announcements of all activities that he participates in
207 tweets with videos and video connections out of 341 tweets	Emphasizes "cooperation"
123 tweets with photos out of 341 tweets	Emphasize "refugees and borders"
47 tweets out of 341 are from @tcbestepe, @rterdogan_ar, and @Akparki accounts	Explicit expressions, mostly hidden emotions
9 tweets in English, 7 tweets in Arabic, 1 tweet in Azerbaijani	Faith-based approach regarding the pandemic

Source: URCAN, C. (2021)

The 152-day time frame for the analysis is from January 1 to June 1, 2020. A total of 341 tweets were sent during this time, 294 of which were original postings that were sent straight from his official account. Retweets from other accounts—primarily "@tcbestepe, @rterdogan_ar, @Akparki"—make up 47 of the 341 tweets. Nine of these tweets are in English, seven are in Arabic, and just one is in Azerbaijani. His account's abundance of shared movies, images, and relationships is a noteworthy aspect. Compared to the tweets without them, they were significantly higher. Out of the 341 tweets, 123 contain photographs and 207 have videos and video links. Taking into consideration the other two official accounts in our investigation, this style appears to be exclusive to his Twitter account. The majority of his tweets pertain to domestic politics when seen in the account's overall context [60].

IV. CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to examine the impact of India's utilization of digital diplomacy during the COVID-19 pandemic on its relationships with key partner nations and international organizations. It sought to analyze the diverse digital diplomacy strategies employed by India throughout the pandemic, evaluate the obstacles and constraints encountered in implementing digital diplomacy, and assess their influence on international relations. Additionally, the study aimed to ascertain whether India's digital diplomacy efforts during the pandemic contributed to the enhancement of its relationships with neighboring countries.

The results of this study show that India's digital diplomacy during the COVID-19 epidemic had a significant influence on its foreign relations. First off, India's efforts in digital diplomacy have improved its reputation in the world. The nation actively used social media, its official Twitter accounts, and other digital channels to project a favorable image and present itself as a responsible international player. As a result, it had improved ties with significant partner countries and international organizations since it was viewed as a dependable participant in the effort to combat the epidemic on a worldwide scale.

Second, India used a variety of digital diplomacy strategies, such as spreading correct information, offering medical assistance, and encouraging a spirit of international cooperation. These strategies enhanced its ability to engage with other countries and organizations and encouraged collaboration, which boosted its soft power and influence in world affairs.

The study noted several obstacles and restrictions, though. Equitable access and representation in India's efforts at digital diplomacy were hampered by the digital divide both inside and outside the nation. The digital diplomatic scene has also occasionally been muddled by misinformation and disinformation efforts, emphasizing the need for improved fact-checking and communication techniques.

While India's digital diplomacy was important for regional relations with its neighbors, not all partnerships were equally strengthened as a result. Based on bilateral issues, regional politics, and opinions of India's reaction to the epidemic, the impact varied. While some of India's neighbors valued its help and improved relations, others expressed concerns or difficulties, highlighting the complexity of regional dynamics.

In conclusion, India's COVID-19 digital diplomacy initiatives had a substantial, complex impact on its foreign relations. While it improved its reputation internationally and consolidated ties with significant partners and organizations, it also brought attention to the difficulties of equal access, information warfare, and the complexity of regional interactions. This study highlights the expanding significance of digital diplomacy in the current international environment and offers guidance to decision-makers looking to successfully navigate similar crises using digital diplomacy tactics.

This study has a wide range of consequences. First, policymakers may improve diplomatic tactics for crisis circumstances by better understanding how India's digital diplomacy affected its connections with important partner countries and international organizations during the COVID-19 epidemic. Second, understanding India's digital diplomacy strategies may help one create powerful digital diplomatic campaigns. Third, acknowledging India's difficulties and constraints reveals possibilities for improvement in crises in the future. The study's conclusions about the development of India's ties with its neighbors also stress the significance of regional diplomacy in times of international health crises and provide suggestions for promoting closer regional ties for the benefit of everybody.

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