



Energy Relation Between India And Central Asia: A Review

Bitter Bhaiya, Research Scholar, Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, University of Allahabad

Abstract

This article brief focuses on the energy dimension of India-Central Asia Relations and fulfillment of India's energy needs. Central Asia's vast energy resources and India's growing energy demand combine to form India's aspirations of expanding energy relations with the region. Article argues that the Indian government and scholars are focused quite narrowly on the energy reserves, i.e., stocks of different resources like natural gas and uranium. Due to their narrow focus, they do not account sufficiently for the energy infrastructure within Central Asia, namely pipelines that would allow energy sources to be efficiently extracted and transported to India.

With the population of around 110.76 billion, India is the World's most populous and rank first in the world in the term of primary energy consumption, according for about 3.5 percent of the world's commercial energy demand. India is currently one of the fastest growing economy in century. India being one of the leading global customers of energy has also been exploring alternative source of energy, including solar and wind power. However, the limited production and high costs of renewable energy forces India to still depend on fossil fuels, including oil and gas. In medium term it still appears as through of hydrocarbons for its energy needs. Energy is something that India fully intended to capture, whatever the cost.

Oil and Gas are strategic assets for a country. Safe and secure supply of energy is the prime force behind economic growth of a country. In simple term, energy security means "availability of sufficient supplies at affordable price". Economic growth is desirable for developing countries, and energy is essential for economic growth that's why energy security has emerged as one of the major development goals of any nation. However the relationship between economic growth and increased energy demands is not always a straightforward linear one. According to the present scenario 6% increase in India gross domestic product would impose increase in demand of 9% on its energy sector.

Energy is the one of the major inputs for the economic development of any country. In the case of the developing countries, the energy sector assume critical importance in view of the over increasing energy needs requiring huge investment to meet them. Energy can be classified into several types based on the following criteria –

Primary and secondary energy

Commercial and non commercial energy

Renewable and Non – renewable energy

At present, India simply does not have enough energy to meet its domestic goals, much less those of a nation with aspiration of being a leading world power. Energy resource and their utilization lie at the heart of India's inability to provide enough electric power to sustain a level of growth sufficient to lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty and sustaining the approach of international power projection. As a New York time succinctly put it "no power, No boom". The relationship between energy and the development is well known, and it is simply impossible for india without adequate energy to regain the economic momentum that made it the envy of the democratic world.

By the mid century of 20-21 India should be the only major economy continuing to grow rapidly. India will have the largest working population of any nation. Indian citizens have talent, ability and entrepreneurial values equal to those of any other. Some reputable commentators have predicted that India will be the largest single economy by midcentury one fifth of the people on the planet will be Indian Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh said, "India is the world's seventh largest energy producer but we are third for primary energy consumption. There is huge gap between producing energy and consumption. That's why we are depending on other for our fulfilment.

This article brief focuses on the energy dimension of India-Central Asia Relations and fulfillment of India's energy needs. Central Asia's vast energy resources and India's growing energy demand combine to form India's aspirations of expanding energy relations with the region. Article argues that the Indian government and scholars are focused quite narrowly on the energy reserves, i.e., stocks of different resources like natural gas and uranium. Due to their narrow focus, they do not account sufficiently for the energy infrastructure within Central Asia, namely pipelines that would allow energy sources to be efficiently extracted and transported to India.

Central Asia is rich in energy resources in terms of hydrocarbons and renewable energy. Much of the energy resources remained unbroached during the Soviet era. Following the Soviet Union's end, Central Asia gained significance for its energy potential . However, these energy resources are not evenly distributed across the CASSs. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have a substantial amount of hydrocarbons– coal, oil, and natural gas. Central Asia is home to an estimated 4% of the world's natural gas reserves and approximately 3% of oil reserves. Hydrocarbons are found both on-shore and off-shore in the Caspian Sea.

All the Central Asian countries are rich and well endowed potentially with minerals and hydroelectric resources. Kazakhstan has world's largest reserve and worlds's largest producer – 23000 tones of uranium in 2014. So strong presences in these countries is essential for two reasons: energy security and strategic security. For the energy security Indian government expenses huge money to import oil and gas. Middle East is India's traditional partner for the energy supply but how volatile this region can be, it is a good idea to look for the other suppliers. Excessive dependence can prove dangerous for any country. So India has started import crude oil from Sakhalin of Russia, Venezuela, Mexico, Algeria, Nigeria, and Angola etc but amount is not sufficient to fulfill its energy need. Therefore, Central Asia became a new energy option for India.

All these happen to be the driving factor for any country in general and India in particular to the Central Asian energy hub. One of the obstacles in bringing Central Asian energy to India is its geographical situation. Central Asia is not the part of immediate neighbourhood and therefore the issue of connectivity between the two regions become of high priority importance. But it would not be easy for India to harness this petro wealth because it has lately realized the potentiality of this and it was a late starter on the Central Asian chessboard. Due to direct access and strong challenges from other countries, it is important for India to take effective foreign policy and develop the profitable route for the supply of crude oil and gas from Central Asian countries. Today Central Asia

is again likely to become the heartland of the world's economic and military powers because of its geo strategic location and natural resources.

India has lately started strategic and economic relations with Central Asia than other countries. Central Asia is one region where the U.S. has openly acknowledged its worth to its own national interest. U.S. took note of the importance of the Central Asia region in 1999 wherein the Silk Road Strategy Act was introduced and passed by the congress, though never passes by the senate. China is another major player whose economic and strategic stakes are next in line along with the U.S. history has strongly bonded China and Central Asia together. The present day interest of China in the region has been dominated by two reasons – prevention of terrorist activities in China's Xinjiang province and its mainland and second reason is, its quest for energy that has been fueled by industrial growth. Russia is another major contending power in Central Asia that has been reflected by the upsurge in its diplomatic pursuits for enhancing its areas of influence in the last two decades. As the world attention has shifted to the Afghanistan – Pakistan region and the Central Asian region, the primary interest of Russia has been limit the influence of United States. Now it has to face strong challenges from global giants to establish itself in Central Asian energy fields. Reaching out the energy market of Central Asia, so far India's energy footprint is barely visible, the major flagship project are the development of TAPI pipeline project and agreement with Kazakhstan on the purchase of 25 percent stake in satpayev oil blocks in the Caspian sea, one of the important oil fields in country. It is important for India to take effective foreign policy and develop a profitable route for supply of crude oil and gas from Central Asian countries.

India and Central Asia share a long history. Unfortunately, the relationship despite close historical and cultural contact has not progressed to the desired extent. The key restraint India faces is the lack of direct access to Central Asia. In 2012 India has come up with a "Connect Central Asia Policy", which includes elements such high level visits, strategic partnership, comprehensive economic engagement, Partnership in the development of energy and natural resources. Earlier to this in 2006, India also announced the provision of \$17 million grant to assist in the development of the recently inaugurated "varzob 1" hydropower station, with the hope of tapping into Tajikistan's hydroelectric potential. The supports TAPI proposal as it will be beneficial immensely if this project materialize so that dependence upon other suppliers from Middle East, Africa can be reduced.

India needs an assured and uninterrupted energy supply for securing its economic interest. Therefore uninterrupted energy supply is very crucial for keeping India's economic wheels in motion. To fulfill their energy needs, India needs to reconsider its relations with Central Asian region. Both India and Central Asia would benefit if they meet regularly and exchange information on their needs and capabilities. India needs to formulate its policies keeping in view Central Asia's specific conditions and needs. Science security and economic outreach are interlinked, it is necessary for India to increase its strategic presence. India should aim for its participation and membership in the Quadripartite Group established 2009. Simultaneous efforts have to be made to convince the U.S. and Russia to include India in the afghan peace process. India should not be sideline in the regional politics because it is directly affected by any instability in the region. India should strengthen its strategic presence in this region. India should look beyond strategic and economic cooperation and five vistas of co-operation with the Central Asian Republics. Positively engaging the Central Asian Republic such as 'friendship hospitals' in each of the Central Asian country, exchanging information and cooperating in counter terrorism, technical and financial help in the establishment of various self help group, promoting educational exchange, training to the nurses in the Central Asian State, and encouragement of Indian Ayurvedic and Unani medicines can go a long way in deepening the relationship by making the India's presence inevitable in the Central Asian Region.

REFERENCES

1. Ansari, Shri. Hamid, Inaugral Address, CRRID national Seminar on India and Central Asia: Perspective on bilateral and Regional co-operation, 2012
2. Friedman, George, The Geopolitical of Russia : Permanent struggle, Texas Stratfor accessed, March, 03, 2012.
3. Joshi, Nirmala, Reconnecting India and Central Asia : Emerging Security and Economic Dimensions, Central Asia Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Programme,
4. Himalayan And Central Asian Studies, Vol. 12, July – December 2008.
5. Foshko, Katherine, India in Central Asia Time for a New Strategy, Gateway House, Indian Council on Global Relation, Feb 04, 2012.
6. Roufhat, Abdul, Mubarik, Mudasir, Kushwaha, Raghav, Pratap, Afghanistan factor In India – Central Asia Relations, International Journals of Research in Social Science, vol. 8, Issue 3, March 2018.
7. Uzbekistan National Development Strategy 2017-2021 [http:// strategy.gov.uz/en](http://strategy.gov.uz/en) Voluntary National Review(VNR) Tajikistan. (2017).
8. Improving Living Standards through Mainstreaming of Sustainable Development Goals into The National Development Policy in Tajikistan published in UN High Level Political Forum World Bank. 2018.
9. “Tajikistan: Changing Regional Environment: Critical to Capitalize (Spring 2018)”, Country Economic Update, World Bank.
10. Agarwal, S. et al. (2020). Awareness and Adoption of Energy Efficiency in Indian Homes. New Delhi: Council on Energy, Environment and Water. Retrieved November 22, 2020.
11. Agarwal, S. et al. (2020). State of Electricity Access in India: Insights from the India Residential
12. Energy Survey (IRES) 2020. New Delhi: Council on Energy, Environment and Water. Agência Brasil. (2019). Agência Brasil. Retrieved 23 July 2020, from <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2019-06/preco-do-gas-e-desemprego-elevam-uso-da-lenha-para-cozinhar-no-brasil> Aklin, M. B. (2015).
13. Quantifying slum electrification in India and explaining local variation. Energy, 80, pp. 203-212. Alkin et al. (2016). Factors affecting household satisfaction with electricity supply in rural India. Nature Energy, 1, 16170.
14. Blue Sky Analytics. (2020). Breezo Smart AQ data platform. Retrieved 10 October 2020, from <https://blueskyhq.in/breezo/air-quality-datasets>.
15. Dubashov, Bakyt; Mbowe, Appolenia; Ismailakhunova, Saida; Zorya, Sergiy. (2019). Kyrgyz Republic: Weak Growth Despite Emerging Regional Opportunities - With a Special Focus on Agricultural Potential for Growth and Development (English).
16. Kyrgyz Republic Economic Update; no. 8. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. (2018, September). Uzbekistan Country Strategy 2018-2023