

Part A – Internship (Most Important)

1. Introduce yourself

My name is Himani. I am pursuing my B.A from Pt. Chiranjilal Sharma Government College, Karnal, affiliated to Kurukshetra University. I have completed my one-month research internship from International Institute of SDGs and Public Policy Research (IISPPR) from 28 May to 28 June 2026.

2. What is an internship?

An internship refers to practical training provided to students to enable them to acquire knowledge and skills relevant to their profession.

3. Why did you choose this internship?

I chose this internship to get practical insight into research, academic writing, policy analysis, and international relations.

4. Which organization did you work with?

International Institute of SDGs and Public Policy Research (IISPPR), Aligarh.

5. What does IISPPR do?

IISPPR is involved in research work on Sustainable Development Goals, Public Policy, International Relations, Education, Governance, and Social Development.

6. How long was your internship?

My internship was between 28th May to 28th June 2026.

7. What skills did you learn?

Research

Literature review

Academic writing

Editing

Teamwork

Critical thinking

Ms word

Google docs

Google scholar

8. What was your role?

I performed the roles of Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, Discussion, Conclusion, and Editing.

9. What digital tools did you use?

Google Scholar

Google Docs

Microsoft Word

Zoom

10. What were the main challenges?

The main challenge was compiling authentic scholarly articles and integrating diverse views and arguments to come up with a literature review.

Part B – Research Topic

11. What was your research topic?

“A Contest for Regional Primacy: A Critical Evaluation of India’s Response to China in South Asia Since 2014.”

12. Why did you choose this topic?

India-China is one of the most crucial geopolitical issues in South Asia. China and India are both nuclear powers; however, their foreign policies differ significantly. The India-China confrontation has several implications for regional politics and should be explored further.

13. What is your research question?

To what extent has Indian foreign policy since 2014 successfully responded to China’s growing influence in South Asia?

14. What is your hypothesis?

India has partially responded to China’s rising influence, but structural constraints limit its effectiveness.

15. Which countries did you study?

Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Maldives, Bhutan.

Part C – China

16. What is Belt and Road?

Belt and Road is an international development strategy launched by China in 2013 to economically integrate Eurasia.

17. What is CPEC?

China Pakistan Economic Corridor is a transportation network linking China's Xinjiang region to Gwadar port.

18. Why is Gwadar Port important?

It provides China with transit access to the Arabian Sea.

19. What is String of Pearls?

String of Pearls is a necklace of Chinese military installations dotted along the Indian Ocean.

20. Why is Hambantota Port important?

It is a deep-water port that China has leased from Sri Lanka for 99 years.

Part D – India's Response

21. What is the Neighborhood first policy?

It is India's foreign policy that emphasizes strengthening relationships with neighboring countries.

22. What is the Act East Policy?

Act East Policy is India's foreign policy that enhances political, economic, and security relations with Southeast and East Asian countries.

23. What is SAGAR?

SAGAR stands for Security and Growth for All in the Region. It is India's maritime doctrine.

24. What is BIMSTEC?

It stands for the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.

25. Why is BIMSTEC important?

BIMSTEC promotes regional cooperation among member states and serves as an alternative to China's growing influence.

26. What is Quad?

Quad is a strategic forum that includes India, the USA, Japan, and Australia.

Part E – Research Methodology

27. Which research design did you use?

I used the qualitative comparative case study design.

28. Why did you use the qualitative research design?

Because the research problem focuses on policies, diplomacy, international relations rather than quantitative data.

29. What are the secondary sources?

They include books, journals, research articles, reports, and official web pages.

30. Why did you use secondary data?

Because there was existing published information on the research topic.

31. What are the limitations of your study?

No fieldwork

Use of English sources only

Use of secondary data

Time constraints (limited to 2014-2024)

Part F – Theories

32. Which theories did you use?

I used the following international relations theories: Balance of Power, Strategic Hedging, Small State, and Soft Power.

33. What is Balance of Power?

It is a theory that states that states pursue alliances to avoid any single state having enough power to dominate others.

34. What is Soft Power?

It is the ability of a state to influence other states based on its culture, diplomacy, and values.

35. What is Strategic Hedging?

It is a theory that states that states with limited power capabilities balance between great powers while avoiding direct confrontations.

36. Why do small states hedge?

Because they are unable to counter China's and India's growing economic power and influence but wish to benefit from engaging with both.

Part G – Case Studies

37. Which country has gained from China the most?

Pakistan has benefited from China the most through CPEC.

38. Which country did India help when it was in trouble?

India helped Sri Lanka overcome the economic crisis of 2022

39. Which country is balancing between India and China?

Bangladesh is maintaining an equal distance between India and China.

40. Why is Nepal strategically important?

It is a landlocked country between India and China.

41. What happened at Doklam?

In 2017, there was a military standoff between China and India at Doklam near the India-Bhutan-China trijunction.

42. What happened at Galwan?

In 2020, China and India had border skirmishes at Galwan.

Part H – Findings

43. What is your main finding?

India's response to China's growing influence has been partially successful.

44. Why is India's response to China only partially successful?

India has responded strategically, but China has more capital and better infrastructure than India.

45. Which policy has been the most successful?

Neighborhood first in combination with SAGAR and diplomacy has been the most successful policy.

46. What did you learn personally?

I have acquired knowledge about research methodology, academic writing, teamwork, editing, and critical thinking.

47. What was your role in writing the report?

I was involved in Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, Discussion, Conclusion, and Editing.

48. Why is this research important?

It explores how geopolitical realities are dynamic and how international relations change based on national interests in time and space. In addition, the study illuminates India's foreign policy towards China.

49. If you had more time, what would you add?

I would have included primary data in the study.

50. What is your conclusion?

China has been economically and strategically influencing its neighboring countries through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), infrastructure, and investment. India's response to China's growing influence in South Asia has taken the form of the Neighborhood first, Act East,

SAGAR, BIMSTEC, and Quad policies. India has partially responded to China's growing influence in South Asia.