India-Georgia Relations

Historical Background

- There is enough literary and folklore-based evidence to suggest that links between India and Georgia and awareness of India in Georgia have existed from very early times of human civilization.
- Fables from India’s Panchtantra are believed to have influenced the Georgian folk legends. Those links were further strengthened in medieval ages by missionaries, travelers, and traders.
- Georgians are said to have served at the Mughal Courts and some of them are believed to have risen to the positions of Governors.
- The Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb’s wife Udaipuri Begum was of Georgian origin.

Soviet Era

- During the Soviet era, Prime Minister Pt. Nehru visited Tbilisi in 1955 (when he was welcomed in Hindi by the renowned Georgian Indologist and Sanskrit scholar Georgi Akhvledani); Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi visited Tbilisi in the summer of 1976. Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Georgia in June 1978 as Foreign Minister.

Post-Soviet/Contemporary Period

- Recognition of Georgia and Establishment of Diplomatic Relations following the declaration of independence by Georgia in the wake of the disintegration of the USSR, India recognized Georgia on 26th December 1991.
- Formal diplomatic relations were established on 28th September 1992. At present we do not have a Resident Mission in Georgia. Our Ambassador to Armenia with residence in Yerevan (Armenia) is concurrently accredited to Georgia.

Institutional Mechanisms

Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations was concluded on 11th May 2000; it was signed by the Georgian Foreign Minister Irakli Menagarishvili and EAM Mr. Jaswant Singh and provides for “regular consultations at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other agreed levels on international, regional and bilateral issues of mutual interest”.

India and Georgia are in the process of establishing Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation which would create a framework for cooperation in diverse areas.

India’s Development Assistance

In December 1994, India had gifted medicines and relief supplies worth Rs. 0.5 million for refugees and displaced persons from Abkhazia.

India’s assistance to Georgia at present is mainly in the field of Human Resource Development.

India offers:
(i) Training slots (25 on average) every year under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC);

(ii) Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Scholarships to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Indian Universities; and

(iii) Kendriya Hindi Sansthan scholarships to study Hindi in India. In addition, an ICCR Chair of Contemporary Indian Studies has been established at the Tbilisi State University (TSU).

Indian Community

- The Indian community is comprised of businessmen, workers, etc.; their number jumped considerably in 2012 and according to rough estimates, around 2000-3000 Indian nationals are now resident in Georgia.
- Traditionally, Indian students have been coming to Georgia to study Medicine at the Tbilisi State Medical University.
- Indian films and food are popular in Georgia.
- Hindi is palpable. The India-Georgia Cultural Association ‘Bharat’ is engaged in promoting Indian culture; it is coordinating Hindi classes in Tbilisi for which the Government of India is extending the required support.

Trade and Economic Relations

- Balance of trade is in favour of India.
- The main commodity of Georgian exports to India is the ferrous waste and scrap, whereas meat and meat products are India’s main items of exports.
- According to Geostat, Georgia, the total bilateral trade between India and Georgia in 2012 was at USD 88.81 million.