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## The Impact of India's International Discourse on Its Arctic Policy

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**Abstract.** Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, international discourse has gradually become a hot topic in the study of political science and international relations, and its impact is especially important in new areas such as space, cyberspace and polar regions, where stable rules and governance system have not yet been developed. In this paper, the influence of international discourse is classified as verbal, structural, institutional and moral. Based on this classification, the increasing influence of India's international discourse on its Arctic policy through its verbal expression, national strength, institutional involvement, and sense of values is examined. The difficulty of developing a strategy in the Arctic is due to the fact that India is not an Arctic country, so there is a cautious attitude of the world community towards it. Northern countries believe that India can use the Arctic for additional natural resources or even political benefit. In addition, there is little coverage of Arctic policy in the Indian media and government activities. Therefore, due to the possible misunderstanding by the international community of India's involvement in the Arctic and the country's weak awareness of Arctic issues, its influence on the international Arctic discourse should be improved in several ways: government officials should participate more actively in international organizations (UN, Arctic Council); the media should fully cover the country's activities in addressing Arctic issues; academically, integration of research, creation of special educational programs should be required, etc. Last but not least, the interests of Arctic Indigenous peoples should be taken into account. The resolution of all these issues can enable India to strengthen its position in the Arctic and increase the country's potential.

**Keywords:** *discourse, Arctic, India, Arctic issues, Arctic policy*

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### Introduction

With the release of the Arctic policy in March 2022, India has officially declared that it is an active participant in Arctic affairs. Despite being a non-Arctic country, it shows its interest in increasing the scientific, political, economic and cultural influence in this region. International discourse as an important tool for disseminating a country's foreign policy makes it possible to analyze its priority in a particular area. This influence, in turn, is reflected in future foreign policy. The theoretical basis of this study was the approach to classifying the influence of international discourse, put forward by the Chinese scientist Zhang Zhizhou, according to which the influence of international discourse can be divided into verbal, structural, institutional and moral [1, Zhang Zh., pp. 38–41]. In terms of the influence of international verbal discourse, the scientist emphasizes its expressive function and focuses on the “speech” of the country's politicians, the media, scientists

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and other representatives of the international community. It, as a “soft power”, can change people’s perception of the country’s image through the dissemination of information. The influence of international structural discourse depends on the structural position of the country in the international community, and the change of a country’s power is the main factor affecting the structural position [2, Waltz K., pp. 5–41]. As for the influence of international institutional discourse, it determines the role of the country in the functioning of international organizations, the formulation of international rules and the impact on the international order. Discussion of the influence of international institutional discourse became popular after the Second World War, when various international organizations gradually came out. Nowadays, in many cases, competition between countries is often reflected in international mechanisms, great powers are trying to protect their interests through these beneficial mechanisms they have already created, while developing countries are trying to capture interest by reforming them, so international institutional discourse plays an important role for those countries that are involved in a certain area later than other countries. The influence of international moral discourse extends to the morality and legality of the activities of subjects in international affairs. First of all, it is necessary to observe such generally recognized principles as human rights, the preservation of peace; in addition, it is essential, for example, as in the case of the Arctic, to pay attention to its natural character, population, etc. (Fig. 1).

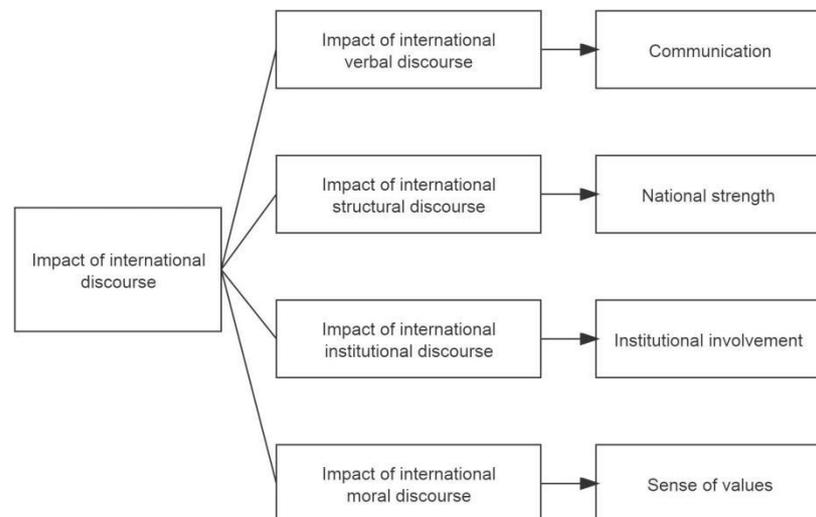


Fig. 1. Influence of international discourse<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore, within the framework of this approach to classifying the influence of international discourse, the impact of India’s international discourse on its Arctic policy is enhanced through speech expression, accumulation of power, institutional participation and its value in Arctic affairs. An analysis of it can help us to analyze the current understanding of the problem of the Arctic policy of India and possible solutions for successful development in the future.

### ***The impact of India’s international verbal discourse on its Arctic Policy***

<sup>1</sup> The scheme was designed by the author according to the classification of Zhang Zhizhou.

In terms of the influence of international verbal discourse on Arctic policy, the Indian government has demonstrated its active involvement in Arctic affairs in recent years through a number of diplomatic statements and political documents. Arctic issues have become a topic of discussion at meetings of leaders of other countries, representatives of the Indian government often participate and speak at international Arctic conferences.

For example, Manmohan Singh, then Prime Minister of India, visited Russia in October 2013. During his visit, he expressed his readiness to strengthen cooperation with Russia in the Arctic [3, Kumari P., pp. 38–40]; in October 2014, former President of India Pranab Mukherjee visited Norway and Finland to thank both countries for their help in granting India the status of a permanent observer state in the Arctic Council [4, Filimonova N., pp. 95–105], he is also the first Indian president who visited Norway [5, Shaumyan T.L., Zhuravel V.P., pp. 175–184]. During the visit, 13 agreements were signed concerning education, defense, earth sciences and other areas [3, p. 7]. In 2015, Pranab Mukherjee also visited Sweden and Russia; Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in turn, visited Russia, the United States and Canada. For the first time in the history of Indian diplomacy, the President and the Prime Minister have made multiple visits to Arctic countries at the same time.

In recent years, India has often strengthened the influence of its international verbal discourse with the help of the Russian Federation. The Russian side invited Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok in September 2019 as a guest of honor. After negotiations, Russian President V.V. Putin said at a press conference [6, Bhagwat D., pp. 73–90]: “Indian energy concerns are invited to participate in projects such as the Far East LNG and the Arctic LNG-2”<sup>2</sup>; in September 2022, at the forum, Narendra Modi again expressed his desire to strengthen partnership with Russia on Arctic issues.

In addition to statements at international forums, India is increasingly incorporating Arctic issues into its policies and strategies. After India joined the Arctic Council in 2013, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a document titled “India and the Arctic”, which demonstrated India’s interests in the Arctic in four areas: scientific, environmental, commercial and strategic, although specific interests were not clearly defined. The Ministry of Earth Sciences listed the main goals of the Indian research program in the Arctic region, which are to study the relationship between the Arctic climate and the Indian monsoons [6, Bhagwat D., pp. 73–90], the influence of global warming, flora and fauna<sup>3</sup>.

It is worth noting that the Indian Arctic Policy published this year is the first official document of the Indian government on Arctic policy, which includes six areas: science and research, climate and environmental protection, economic and human development, transport and commu-

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<sup>2</sup> Devyatkin P. Russia and India set to deepen Trade and Investment in Arctic Energy. 05 September, 2019. URL: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/russia-and-india-set-deepen-trade-and-investment-arctic-energy> (accessed 01 December 2022).

<sup>3</sup> MOES, India. Scientific Endeavours in the Arctic. URL: [https://moes.gov.in/programmes/polar-science-cryosphere/indian-scientific-endeavors-arctic?language\\_content\\_entity=en](https://moes.gov.in/programmes/polar-science-cryosphere/indian-scientific-endeavors-arctic?language_content_entity=en) (accessed 03 December 2022).

nications, governance and international cooperation, national capacity building [7, Zaikov K.S., Bhagwat D., pp. 261–274]. All sections, except for scientific research, are developed in detail for the first time, the goals and ways of achieving them in the relevant areas of the Arctic are explained to a certain extent. India also expressed its position, substantiated the principles and put forward political ideas on Arctic issues in the light of the new Arctic policy.

### ***The impact of India's international structural discourse on its Arctic Policy***

The influence of India's international structural discourse on its Arctic policy is improving mainly due to the growth of national power in recent years. India's economic success in the 21st century has provided resources for organizing Arctic scientific expeditions, optimizing Arctic research equipment, and training Arctic research personnel. The influence of the international discourse of non-Arctic countries on Arctic affairs largely depends on the country's ability to acquire and transmit Arctic knowledge [8, Cheng B., p. 4]. Arctic scientific research certainly plays an important role in these matters.

Some believe that scientific research in India began when Mahendra Nath Bose collected fossil plants in the Arctic with Norwegian scientists in 1962. In fact, India officially launched scientific expeditions in the Arctic Ocean in 2007, when the Himodri Arctic Research Station was established on the Svalbard archipelago. India regularly arranges scientific expeditions (about 3–4 times a year) after that [9, Grinyaev S.N., Shevchenko A.V., Medvedev D.A., pp. 18–24], and since then the research station has already received more than 300 Indian scientists<sup>4</sup>. India's scientific activity is expanding rapidly thanks to the experience gained in Antarctica. As the former secretary of India H.P. Rajan said in the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf: "India has been conducting scientific research and exploration in Antarctica for over 30 years, which has allowed India to play a unique and important role in Arctic affairs" [10, Rajan H.P., pp. 146–154]. In 2013, India decided to invest 12 million dollars in Arctic research for five years, with 3 million allocated to a scientific station [4, Filimonova N., pp. 95–115]. A year later, the IndArk multi-purpose floating observatory was created at Kongsford on Svalbard. In addition, the established National Center for Polar and Oceanic Research (NCPOR), as India's key polar science institution, has made progress in many areas. In particular, current research in the Arctic includes aerosol monitoring over the polar regions under the auspices of the Indian Polar Aerosol Network (POLAERNET), phylogenetic modeling of bacterial communities in the Kongsfjord, metagenomic assemblies of genomes (MAG) from glacial ecosystems Midtrel-Lovenbreen, research on phytoplankton dynamics and biogeochemistry of the Kongsfjord, etc.<sup>5</sup> It can be said that this institution has further advanced Indian scientific research in the Arctic.

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<sup>4</sup> Middleton A. India's Arctic Policy: Strong foothold on science and business interests. HIGH NORTH NEWS, Mar 23, 2022. URL: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/indias-arctic-policy-strong-foothold-science-and-business-interests> (accessed 01 December 2022).

<sup>5</sup> MOES, India. Annual Report 2021-22. July 2022. URL: <https://moef.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Annual-report-2021-22-Final.pdf> (accessed 04 December 2022).

As the overall power of India grows, the Arctic countries, especially Norway and Russia, have shown increasing interest in India's participation in Arctic exploration. This is reflected primarily in the growing participation of India in international Arctic scientific work. In 2009, India and the Norwegian Institute of Polar Research signed a memorandum of understanding on joint research activities in the Arctic<sup>6</sup>. Joint declarations between India and Russia in subsequent years included cooperation in the Arctic. At the same time, India's interest in the development of Arctic resources is growing. Since 2014, India has placed oil and gas resources at the forefront of its cooperation with Russia, in particular, Indian companies acquired a 15% stake in the Vankorneft oil company in 2015<sup>7</sup>, today this share has increased to 49.9%. In addition, Indian companies acquired a 29.9% stake in Taas-Yuryakh Neftegazodobycha<sup>8</sup>. ONGC Videsh has acquired another 20% stake in the Sakhalin-1 project and is also the owner of Imperial Energy company. Oil India Limited acquired a 50% stake in the License 61 project [11, Bhagwat D., p. 488–506]. In addition to oil and gas resources, Indian companies are also showing great interest in other mineral resources. In 2019, Coal India Limited signed agreements with two Russian companies for the extraction of coking coal in the Far East and the Arctic<sup>9</sup>.

### ***The impact of India's international institutional discourse on its Arctic Policy***

The influence of international institutional discourse on the country's Arctic policy depends on the contribution to the relevant international mechanisms. Arctic research is governed by general international law and specific treaties such as the UN Charter, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Svalbard Treaty. India signed the Svalbard Treaty in 1920, even before China, and this treaty grants India the right to scientific research, free navigation and a number of other rights. In addition, India has acceded not only to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, but also to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which held the COP27 summit in Sharm El Sheikh. India is also a member of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), a category B member of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a member of the Executive Council of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), etc. All of these provide the institutional framework for India's involvement in Arctic affairs, which became available when the country was admitted as an official observer to the Arctic Council, the most important regional governance

<sup>6</sup> MOES, India. International collaboration convention: INDO-NORWAY. op.cit.

<sup>7</sup> Joint Statement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of India: Shared Trust, New Horizons, Ministry of External Affairs of India. December 24, 2015. URL: [https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26243/Joint\\_Statement](https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26243/Joint_Statement) (accessed 03 December 2022).

<sup>8</sup> «Rosneft'» podpisala kontrakt s Indian Oil na postavku v Indiyu do 2 mln tonn nefti, Departament informatsii i reklamy PAO «NK «Rosneft'» [Rosneft signed a contract with Indian Oil for the supply of up to 2 million tons of oil to India, Rosneft Information and Advertising Department. December 6, 2021]. URL: <https://www.rosneft.ru/press/releases/item/208725/> (accessed 01 December 2022).

<sup>9</sup> Debjoy Sengupta. Coal India signs MoUs with Russia for coking coal, The Economic Times. September 04, 2019. URL: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/metals-mining/coal-india-signs-mous-with-russia-for-coking-coal/printarticle/70980534.cms> (accessed 01 December 2022).

mechanism for the Arctic, in May 2013. In addition to its extensive membership, India has demonstrated its responsibility and commitment as an emerging power, always ready to contribute to the development and improvement of various international mechanisms in the Arctic region, in particular, to the development of rules. As a member of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM), India has participated in all ATCM meetings over the past three years and provided scientific and environmental information and working papers, in addition, ATCM will be hosted by India in 2023<sup>10</sup>. India is also a member of the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), its representatives always take into account the need to ensure the sustainable development of marine living resources and the reasonable protection of the polar environment, objectively put forward a number of reasonable proposals. This experience gained by India in Antarctica can help strengthen the influence of international institutional discourse on its Arctic policy.

### ***The impact of India's international moral discourse on its Arctic Policy***

While engaging in Arctic affairs, India always takes into account the special natural and social environment of the Arctic region and adheres to accepted moral principles. In this regard, India plays a positive role in protecting the rights of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic; it supported the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the UN session in 2007<sup>11</sup>. Inside the country, Indian bishops have always called for the conscientious observance of laws to protect indigenous peoples, preserve their language, culture and traditions and prevent them from loss of identity, which is also in line with moral principles in the Arctic. In addition, in May 2013, Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Navtej Sarna noted that India plans to “productively interact with the indigenous people of the region (Arctic) and work with them on environmental issues”<sup>12</sup>.

Significantly, in joining the Arctic Council, the country also pledged to respect the sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction of Arctic countries in the region and to attach importance to scientific research and environmental protection in the Arctic. In this regard, India's new Arctic Policy 2022 also emphasizes the importance of environmental and climate protection and the concept of sustainable development. It is assumed that the Arctic region is similar to the Himalayan region in terms of natural environment, so India can provide various types of assistance. In general, India adheres to the principles of harmonious coexistence of people and nature in the Arctic, the balance of environmental protection with economic development, as well as fairness between the interests of present and future generations.

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<sup>10</sup> MOES, India. International collaboration convention: Others. op.cit. URL: <https://moes.gov.in/international-collaboration-convention/others> (accessed 07 December 2022).

<sup>11</sup> General Assembly adopts Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples; 'Major Step Forward' towards human rights for all, says President". UN General Assembly GA/10612. September 13, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Kabir Taneja. India Arrives at the Arctic, New York Times. May 20, 2013. URL: <https://www.mea.gov.in/articles-in-foreign-media.htm?dtl/21730/india+arrives+at+the+arctic> (accessed 01 December 2022).

***Problems in strengthening the influence of international discourses  
and approach to their solution***

As can be seen from the above, India has formed a certain positive influence of international discourses on its Arctic policy and is playing an increasingly important role in this region. However, given the status of a non-Arctic state and a developing country, India faces a number of internal and external restrictions in this regard.

As for the difficulties in strengthening the influence of international verbal discourse on its Arctic policy, firstly, India's participation in the Arctic is interpreted differently by the international community in the context of its growing participation in the political arena and the late emergence of official Arctic policy. Fifteen years have already passed since 2007, when the first Arctic research expedition was organized. Only in March 2022, the government formulated its first Arctic policy, which lagged far behind not only the eight Arctic states, but also such non-Arctic countries as Germany, Japan, South Korea and even China. The absence of an Arctic policy to some extent determined the ambiguity of India's international involvement in the Arctic, as domestic environmental and resource issues led to many arguments in favor of the opinion of "resource capture" and "environmental destruction". Undoubtedly, the Arctic states pay special attention to the involvement of non-Arctic states in Arctic affairs, including India. In the context of today's volatile global environment, there is also the question of whether India has strategic and military intentions in the Arctic and whether it will increase influence as a result of increased cooperation and increased investment in countries such as Russia.

Secondly, the Indian media pay little attention to the Arctic and have not accumulated enough knowledge about it, resulting in a lack of Arctic consciousness in society.

India is geographically distant from the Arctic and has not been involved in Arctic affairs for long, Arctic issues have rarely been covered in the press inside the country. On the one hand, this makes it difficult for the Indian media to cover India's participation in the Arctic and constructively interpret its Arctic policy. On the other hand, it is difficult for the Indian media to respond effectively to questions from the Western media. At the same time, the lack of coverage of this topic has led to an insufficient understanding of the problems of the Arctic by the population and the difficulty of forming a broad base of discourse. In addition, India's proximity to the Indian Ocean means that people's attention tends to be focused on the Indian Ocean rather than the Arctic Ocean.

Therefore, due to the possible misunderstanding of the international community of India's participation in the Arctic and the poor awareness of Arctic issues, the influence of international speech discourse on the Arctic policy of India should be improved in three directions: political, media and academic.

Scientists Jawahar Bhagwat and A.E. Shaparov believe that India's large-scale participation in the Arctic is still in its infancy, since there is no plan that specifies the particular steps to be taken to implement the policy [12, pp. 16–22]. The new 2022 policy sets the direction for India's in-

volvement in Arctic affairs, but it is relatively general in nature, so specific research and resource development programs in the Arctic should be established in the future. At the same time, Indian officials should be more involved in various organizations such as the UN and its bodies, the Arctic Council and the Arctic Circle Forum, etc., in order to better and more accurately explain to the international community India's position on Arctic policy. In terms of media discourse, the relevant information department should play a leading role in shaping public opinion and clarifying the importance of Arctic affairs. For example, documentaries about the Arctic and books about the Arctic can be produced in the country to increase the knowledge of the general public about the region. All this should properly explain India's involvement in Arctic affairs, which will resolve the doubts of the international community and increase its confidence. The scientists not only conduct research, but are also an important component in the formation of policy and public opinion. Therefore, on the one hand, researchers should actively share their discoveries and enable the international community to hear professional opinions; on the other hand, they should invite leaders and scientists from Western countries, especially Arctic ones, and change their views on India's participation in Arctic affairs.

The influence of India's international structural discourse on its Arctic policy is also associated with a number of problems. In terms of external factors, there is a lot of competition from countries and organizations seeking to gain real influence in the Arctic. In terms of its own strength, participation in Arctic affairs for non-Arctic countries requires a higher level of state capacity, economy and science and technology, while India's investment in Arctic research is insufficient, and relevant institutions need to be improved and updated. Although India ranks third in the world GDP ranking according to the World Bank<sup>13</sup>, it is still a developing country with limited funds for Arctic research and still does not have a polar research vessel, which has resulted in insufficient scientific research and lagging behind in research of applied technologies for the special conditions of the Arctic. All this limits its participation in Arctic affairs. Meanwhile, India's scientific strength is distributed among organizations such as NCPOR, Earth System Science Organization-National Center for Polar and Ocean Research, Geological Survey of India, CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Jawaharlal Nehru University, energy companies, etc. In many cases, they are independent of each other, which makes it difficult to integrate research achievements. By the way, India does not yet have a single university with an educational program related to the Arctic [13, Shailesh N., Suba Ch.D., pp. 901–904], and few people have heard about university cooperation programs with other Arctic countries.

It is well known that the impact of a country's international discourse often depends on the degree of activity of the state in the international community. Therefore, if India wants to strengthen its influence of international structural discourse on foreign policy, it should expand its

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<sup>13</sup> GDP based on PPP valuation of country GDP, The World Bank. 2022. URL: [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.PP.CD?most\\_recent\\_value\\_desc=true](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.PP.CD?most_recent_value_desc=true) (accessed 01 December 2022).

participation and contribution. In the context of the Arctic, the most direct way is to increase investment in Arctic scientific research, as well as expand research areas. At the same time, India should focus on transforming and applying the results of scientific research in the Arctic in order to solve the practical problems of the Arctic. Secondly, research forces should be integrated and a platform for sharing research achievements should be established. In particular, the synergy of various organizations, such as public research institutions, universities and enterprises, should be further strengthened so that the Arctic natural, humanitarian and social sciences develop harmoniously. In addition, educational institutions should implement educational programs related to the Arctic and actively develop cooperation with universities in the Arctic countries, including joint training, exchange programs and internships.

International institutional discourse helps in securing its own interests in a legitimate form. But in fact, India's degree of participation in existing international Arctic mechanisms has been low, both in terms of breadth and depth of participation. For example, in the first case, although India has joined a number of Arctic governance mechanisms in recent years, it has not been among the first to do so. Japan, Italy, France and the Netherlands have applied for observer status in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council<sup>14</sup>, while India has not yet paid attention to this sub-regional organization. In the second case, participation and contributions to international mechanisms were modest due to barriers such as language and knowledge of the rules. For example, India does not have a permanent representative in the IMO, while other Asian countries such as China, Japan, Korea and Singapore have representatives in every working group and committee, in addition to permanent representatives, and have expert groups involved in working studies<sup>15</sup>. In addition, India has not sent enough experts to the Arctic Council working groups since 2013, which has prevented it from influencing the creation of new rules. This is largely due to the minor role of the Arctic in India's foreign strategy, which is one of the reasons why the Arctic policy was not published until 2022.

Thirdly, non-Arctic states, including India, often face restrictions on their participation in this region. The Arctic states believe that the Arctic is their property and they need to consolidate their influence through various mechanisms, and one of the most important is the Arctic Council, which has adopted a "limited openness" to other states. The Nuuk Declaration clearly states that the role of observers is limited to participation in scientific research or financial support: the amount of funding should not exceed that of the Arctic states; observers do not have the right to vote on issues raised; speeches are subject to the approval of the chairman of the meeting<sup>16</sup>. It is clear that although non-Arctic countries, including India, have been admitted as observers to the

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<sup>14</sup> Members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council, The Barents Euro-Arctic Council. URL: <https://barents-council.org/barents-euro-arctic-council/members-of-the-beac-and-the-brc> (accessed 18 January 2023).

<sup>15</sup> Kalyanaraman M., Panda L.K. A case of a maritime presence adrift, THE HINDU. February 05, 2020. URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-case-of-a-maritime-presence-adrift/article30736915.ece> (accessed 01 December 2022).

<sup>16</sup> Nuuk Declaration. The Seventh Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council, Nuuk, Greenland. May 12, 2011. URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/11374/92> (accessed 06 August 2022).

Arctic Council, they still have little influence of international institutional discourse on Arctic issues, naturally, its influence on their policies is also small.

In response to external and internal factors, in order to increase the influence of international institutional discourse on its Arctic policy, India should more often take part in international Arctic projects. It should become more active in shaping maritime rules and international Arctic mechanisms, and reasonably express and defend its interests. India should also study the laws and policies of the Arctic countries, abide by them and protect its interests together with them. On the other hand, India should train diplomatic personnel with knowledge of laws, foreign languages and rhetoric, who can fully realize their right to vote and speak out to become a true “active” participant.

It is worth noting that Arctic research, climate and environmental issues are the most pressing issues in the region, so non-Arctic countries such as India should continue to pay attention to these issues. Following the development of the situation in the Arctic, it is necessary to lead the development of a new cooperation mechanism in time, to become a policy initiator [14, pp. 27–32]. For example, in the context of the current world order and the suspension of the Arctic Council, India may initiate the creation of a multilateral mechanism for regional cooperation of a less politically sensitive nature. Such a mechanism has become more accessible in recent years and can involve both Arctic and non-Arctic countries. An example is the trilateral dialogue on cooperation in the Far East of the Russian Federation and the Russian Arctic between Japan, India and Russia in 2021<sup>17</sup>. However, taking into account a number of events in the Arctic after the SMO on February 24, 2022, at this stage, it would be more promising for India to establish an Arctic cooperation mechanism involving China, Russia, and India. Although there are still issues between India and China, including territorial disputes, and they are often seen as major strategic competitors, there is no direct conflict of interest between India and China in the Arctic region; on the contrary, they have many common interests in the field of climate change, environmental protection and resource development, so there is great potential for trilateral cooperation in the Russian Arctic. In addition, such cooperation in the Arctic can, on the one hand, reduce the long-standing mutual distrust between the two countries, and Russia can not only contribute to the cooperation itself, but also serve as a regulator in relations between the countries. On the other hand, such a trilateral mechanism could become an example of cooperation between non-Arctic and Arctic states in the Arctic, facilitate coordination between the international communities in the region, and contribute to peace, stability, and sustainable development.

In the Arctic, international institutional discourse is important because it ensures the legitimacy of the country's activities in the region, in this respect it is coercive, while in contrast, inter-

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<sup>17</sup> Indiya i Yaponiya opredelili prioritnyye napravleniya sotrudnichestva na rossiyskom Dal'nem Vostoke, Ministerstvo RF po razvitiyu Dal'nego Vostoka i Arktiki [India and Japan have identified priority areas for cooperation in the Russian Far East, Ministry of the Russian Federation for the Development of the Far East and the Arctic]. URL: <https://minvr.gov.ru/press-center/news/indiya-i-yaponiya-opredelili-prioritnyye-napravleniya-sotrudnichestva-na-rossiyskom-dal'nem-vostoke-31454/> (accessed 18 January 2023).

national moral discourse is usually voluntary, but this does not mean that it is unimportant; it is the ideological basis for all of a country's international activities and is also an important part of its image. But at present, as the geo-economic and geo-security value of the Arctic is rapidly increasing, there is already a tendency for international moral discourse on Arctic policy to diminish in many countries. In addition, the Arctic is becoming more and more “militarized”, the moral demands of the Arctic indigenous peoples, environmental NGOs are at risk of being ineffective, all this shows that it is necessary to pay attention to the influence of international moral discourse on Arctic politics.

For India, the issue is even more complex: it offers both an opportunity and a challenge. The international community, especially the Arctic countries, is wary of the involvement of non-Arctic states in Arctic affairs, and India needs to take international responsibility for its participation, which will help it get support from outside, otherwise the mentioned opinions about the “resource capture” and “environmental destruction” may become popular.

In the “era of development”, a number of international companies have become a significant force in the economic development of the Arctic. Although India's focus so far has been on scientific research, mainly with Norway and the EU [6, Bhagwat D., pp. 73–90]<sup>18</sup>, but the new Arctic policy notes the desire to expand its investments in the energy sector of the Arctic countries, and therefore in the future the country may face some moral problems. For example, the desire to comply with the interests of energy organizations often contradicts the interests of the fragile ecological environment of the Arctic, and the use of traditional experience will inevitably damage the Arctic ecosystem. Traditionally, environmental NGOs, such as Greenpeace, WWF, etc., play an important role in international moral discourse. However, Indian environmental NGOs face barriers: although the number of environmental NGOs in the country is significant, many of them are unable to obtain permanent funding for their work, which makes it difficult to ensure the functioning of organizations and the creation of a long-term strategy. In addition, Indian environmental NGOs usually have few links to international NGOs, the lack of such connection or cooperation limits their development; therefore, in this regard, they are less involved in Arctic affairs. In addition, India itself has environmental problems; according to the annual report of the Environmental Performance Index, India ranks last out of 180 countries in the EPI 2022 ranking with a score of 18.9, influenced by such factors as changes in water quality, air pollution, biodiversity and so on<sup>19</sup>. All this has led to a de facto “loss of discourse” in morality.

Improving the influence of international moral discourse cannot be done quickly; it requires long-term efforts not only from the government, but also from a number of non-state actors, even the entire nation. Energy companies, as the main force for the economic development of the Arctic, should maintain a balance in their affairs. In fact, in interviews with Arctic indigenous

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<sup>18</sup> EU-India calls on Polar Climate and Developing the next generation of Earth system models, The European Union. December 13, 2019. URL: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/worldwide/india/eu-india-calls-polar-climate-anddeveloping-next-generation-earth-system-models> (accessed 01 September 2022).

<sup>19</sup> Wolf M.J., Emerson J.W., Esty D.C., de Sherbinin A., Wendling Z.A. et al. 2022 Environmental Performance Index, CT: Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy. URL: [epi.yale.edu](http://epi.yale.edu) (accessed 18 January 2023).

peoples, participants often expressed their concerns about the Arctic energy development project. Therefore, the Indian government should encourage NGOs to join international organizations dealing with climate change, environmental protection and ensuring the life of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic. The government should continue to promote the right and equitable concept, work with countries and international organizations to strengthen its influence of international moral discourse on its Arctic policy, in order to make the Arctic a model zone for mutually beneficial cooperation and harmonious coexistence of human and nature. It is worth mentioning that India's Arctic policy is centered on the "Indian philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: the world is one family"<sup>20</sup>, and what the Indian path will look like, we will find out in the future.

### **Conclusion**

Since the 20th century, international discourse has become an important topic in the study of political science and international relations. Scientists have created different methods for classifying international discourse, the influence of international discourse, etc. In particular, according to the Chinese scientist Zhang Zhizhou, the influence of international discourse is divided into verbal, structural, institutional and moral. India, as a large emerging power and an interested party in Arctic affairs, places great emphasis on the influence of international discourse on its Arctic policy. Thanks to a series of speeches by politicians and scientists, the development of a strategy, the influence of international verbal discourse on Arctic politics is increasing, and in recent years, due to the rapid development of the economy and the rise in overall power, it has successfully developed its Arctic sector, including through the creation of research institutions and cooperation with interested countries, which makes it possible to strengthen the influence of international structural discourse on politics. India is making great efforts to strengthen its role in various international and regional organizations such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Arctic Council. Moreover, India knows that without morality in the Arctic, which is far from its territory, it is impossible to get support from the Arctic countries and indigenous peoples; therefore, it advocates respect for the fundamental issues of the region.

However, India is a rather late participant and a non-Arctic country, which negatively affects its participation in the affairs and implementation of Arctic interests. In terms of the existing problem in the influence of international verbal discourse, such assessments as "resource capture" and "environmental destruction" are often mentioned by scientists from the Arctic countries. The media in the country do not disseminate much information about the Arctic. India needs to change the stereotypes of the perception of the international community at various events, and the country's media should show the Arctic to its people more often and more correctly. Regarding the problem in influencing international structural discourse on its policies, the integration of research achievements, lack of investment and lack of Arctic education need to be addressed. Problems related to the influence of international institutional discourse, including inactive partic-

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<sup>20</sup> MOES, India. India's Arctic Policy. op.cit. (accessed 06 December 2022).

ipation in some regional organizations and lack of knowledge of relevant rights and laws, severely limit the strengthening of its own interests in a legitimate form. To increase the influence of international institutional discourse on Arctic policy, it is important to participate in international Arctic mechanisms in a legal and reasonable manner. At the same time, training of personnel is also important in order to use their right on a legal basis. Influencing international moral discourse on Arctic policy requires a long-term effort, environmental NGOs in this sense play a key role, the country and commercial companies are obliged to take on international social responsibility.

Overall, in today's world, India is aware that the influence of international discourse is important for its own Arctic policy, but further systematic work is needed for it to play a more positive role.

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