

Digital Diplomacy vs. Traditional Diplomacy: A Comparative Analysis in the Post-Pandemic Landscape

H.M.O.Y. Senavirathne¹

Abstract

As said by Cohen (1998), diplomacy, the “engine room” of international relations, is an essential tool that governments worldwide use to achieve their foreign policy objectives and influence the decisions and behavior of foreign governments through dialogue, negotiations or other peaceful measures. Diplomacy, in the present day context, has undergone significant changes, especially, with the advancement of technology and the outbreak of unprecedented phenomena such as the COVID-19 pandemic. With the emergence of the pandemic, digitalization started to develop at a rapid pace and digital tools, particularly zoom technology, began to play a significant role within the scope of diplomacy as the pandemic restricted face-to-face communication. Given that states have become more inclined to use digital tools rather than conduct their foreign relations the traditional way, this study intends to examine whether traditional diplomacy has been replaced by digital diplomacy, particularly focusing on the period following the global pandemic, while understanding how these developments have influenced the field of diplomacy. In order to attain the foretold objective of the study, a qualitative research approach has been adopted by collecting data through secondary data sources such as publications, academic articles, reports, journal articles, books and other media sources while analyzing the data using the content analysis method. Findings of the study reveal that in the post-pandemic era, traditional diplomacy has not been entirely replaced by digital diplomacy but has undergone a significant transformation. The study further evaluates the irreplaceable aspects of traditional diplomacy while maintaining its value in certain contexts. The research findings conclude that while digital diplomacy has gained prominence today due to its convenience and accessibility, traditional diplomacy remains relevant for situations demanding a more personal touch, confidentiality and a deep understanding of cultural dynamics. Both forms of diplomacy are likely to coexist, with their roles adapting to the specific contexts and challenges of the modern world.

Keywords: *Diplomacy, Digital Diplomacy, Digitalization, Post- pandemic*

¹ BA Honours in International Studies, University of Kelaniya
osuniyashodya11@gmail.com