

## INDIA IN WORLD AFFAIRS: THE JOURNEY OF 75 YEARS

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India marks its 75th Independence Day on 15 August 2021. Global celebrations for the anniversary were formally launched on 12 March 2021 with 75 weeks of festivities called 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'. In 75 years, Indian democracy has come a long way. The Republic of India has diplomatic relations with 201 states around the globe having 199 missions and posts operating globally while plans to open new missions in 2020-21 hosted by 11 UN Member States. With the world's expenditure, fourth, fifth largest economy by GDP nominal rates and third largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity, India is a prominent regional power and nuclear power, an emerging global power and a potential superpower. India assumes a growing international influence and a prominent voice in global affairs. This paper intends to examine India's story from agricultural production to nuclear and space technology, from affordable health care to world-class educational institutions, from Ayurveda to biotechnology, from giant steel plants to becoming an IT power and having the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world. This paper outlines the changing dynamics of India's foreign affairs with international community in general and major powers in particular.

**Key words:** Amrit Mahotsav, Democracy, Nuclear Power, Superpower, International Community

### Introduction

India is the largest democracy in the world. India has consistently followed the policy of peace, friendly relations with other countries and sovereign equality of all nations big and small. The success of India's policy lies in the fact that it has well adjusted with the changing times and circumstances and its core principles have stood the test of time. National interest has been the governing principle of India's foreign policy even at the time of Nehru who was inspired by the ideal of world peace, toleration and mutual respect among nations. In operational terms, the idea of national interest takes the form of concrete objectives of foreign policy. According to Appadorai and M. S. Rajan, there are three fundamental objectives of India's Foreign policy:

- The preservation of India's territorial integrity and independence of foreign policy
- Promoting international peace and security
- Economic development of India

While keeping in view the fundamental objectives of India's foreign policy India has adopted and pursued certain principles to realize these objectives. Some of these principles are given in Article 51 under the Directive Principles of Policy in the Constitution Of India. These principles are: promotion of international peace and security; friendly relations with other countries; respect for international law and international organizations like the UN; and finally the peaceful settlement of international disputes. The principles of India's foreign policy and its objectives are closely interlinked with each other. These principles have stood the test of time and are ingrained in the international law and India's foreign policy practice.

After the Cold War, particularly since the 2000s, the rapid rise of China has presented a challenge to United States (US) influence. Although the US can still be regarded as the sole superpower, its relative decline is stark. Asian players, such as Japan, the ASEAN countries and Australia, and India, have been encountering and adapting to the new circumstances, which might be designated as a power transformation in Asia.

Although the US and China can be regarded as the two major powers of the present and the future, among the Asian players, India is trying evidently to catch up with those two countries as a major power, albeit lagging perhaps one or two laps behind them.

Hence, the main objective of this article is to present an examination of how India is attempting to construct its overall foreign policy in the current international situation and beyond. To state the conclusion at the beginning, India is trying to respond to the emerging situation by aiming to become a major power itself in the future.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy (2015)**

**Editors: Raja Mohan, Srinath Raghavan, David M. Malone**

Following the end of the Cold War, the economic reforms in the early 1990s, and ensuing impressive growth rates, India has emerged as a leading voice in global affairs, particularly on international economic issues. Its domestic market is fast-growing, and India is becoming increasingly important to global geo-strategic calculations, at a time when it has been outperforming many other growing economies, and is the only Asian country with the heft to counterbalance China. Indeed, so much is India defined internationally by its economic performance (and challenges) that other dimensions of its internal situation, notably relevant to security, and of its foreign policy have been relatively neglected in the existing literature.

This handbook presents an innovative, high-profile volume, providing an authoritative and accessible examination and critique of Indian foreign policy. The handbook brings together

essays from a global team of leading experts in the field to provide a comprehensive study of the various dimensions of Indian foreign policy.

**India's Foreign Policy: Surviving in a Turbulent World (2020) Editors: Anil Wadhwa, Arvind Gupta**

Written by foreign policy experts and academics this book develops the frameworks and strategies for India's foreign policy that can be adopted to meet the emerging challenges and non-traditional threats in the new world order. It studies the important aspects of India's foreign policy in the present unsettled world order and comes up with strategies and policy suggestions. It raises several questions to highlight the future direction of foreign policy and the challenges that India may have to deal with in the coming years. The book covers the domestic dimension of the country's foreign policy, which is often missed out in policy discussion. It examines the close link between national security and foreign policy, and shows how foreign policy can be leveraged to strengthen the economy and make India a hub of innovation. This book emphasizes soft power strategies to ensure that a strategic approach to soft power projection is adopted.

India's Foreign Policy: Surviving in a Turbulent World is a ready reference on India's foreign policy that can be used to understand the complexities of the topics covered.

**Modi and the Reinvention of Indian Foreign Policy (2019)**

**Author: Ian Hall**

Narendra Modi's energetic personal diplomacy and promise to make India a 'leading power' surprised many analysts. Most had predicted that his government would concentrate on domestic issues, on the growth and development demanded by Indian voters, and that he lacked necessary experience in international relations. Instead, Modi's first term saw a concerted attempt to reinvent Indian foreign policy by replacing inherited understandings of its place in the world with one drawn largely from Hindu nationalist ideology. Following Modi's re-election in 2019, this book explores the drivers of this reinvention, arguing it arose from a combination of elite conviction and

electoral calculation, and the impact it has had on India's international relations.

**Hypotheses:**

- The evolution of foreign policy that took place immediately after independence was informed with the same degree of idealism that permeated the freedom struggle.
- Mrs. Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister of India, she leaned more on the realist aspects of India's foreign policy. She did not depend on idealism entirely. During her regime, a lot of things happened which clearly brought India onto the world map.
- Realism appears in foreign policy in May 1998 when India decided overtly to go for nuclear tests. India declared to the world that it was a nuclear-weapon power.

**Objectives:**

- To analyse India's emergence from a former British colony to newly industrialised country and its extensive network of foreign relations with other states.
- To study India's role in leading international organization like the United Nations, the Asian Development Bank, New Development BRICS Bank, and G-20.

**Methodology:**

Historical-analytical method has been used for the study. Primary data has been sought from Governments documents, leaders' speeches, Houses debates and official records of the organizations. Secondary data is collected from books, journals newspapers, articles and internet. Content analysis has been also part of the study.

**Analysis & Interpretation:**

On the basis of India's foreign policy practice for last 75 years, the following points of her achievements may be noted:

- A. Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, India was the founder member of the Nonaligned Movement. India has played an active role in strengthening the Movement and making it an effective voice in representing the collective aspirations and interests of developing countries on such vital issues as development, peace and stability. India hosted the 7th NAM Summit in New Delhi in 1983. In recent years, after the end of the Cold War, our foreign policy has focused on strengthening the Movement by redefining its priorities in keeping with the changing times.
- B. India has also been in the forefront of the world community in the struggle against colonialism. Indeed, the Independence of India itself played the role of a catalyst in removing the vestiges of colonialism in other parts of the developing world, particularly in Africa. India was also the first country to raise the question of racial discrimination in South Africa in the UN in 1946. It was at India's initiative that the AFRICA (Action for Resistance to Invasion, Colonialism and Apartheid) Fund was set up at the 8th NAM Summit in Harare in 1986. India was the Chairman of the AFRICA Fund Committee, which wound up in 1993.
- C. A notable feature of Indian foreign policy has been its strong advocacy of general and complete disarmament, with nuclear disarmament being accorded the highest priority. Towards this end, India has taken several initiatives within the United Nations and outside. In 1988, India presented to the 3rd Session of the UN General Assembly, devoted to Disarmament, an Action Plan for ushering in a Nuclear Weapons-Free and Non-Violent World Order. In order to highlight international concern about the unprecedented nuclear arms race, India was also a member of the Six-Nation Five-

Continent joint Initiative for promoting disarmament in the 1980s. But while India has, and will, remain committed to nuclear disarmament, to be achieved in a time-bound framework, it has consistently and in a principled manner Opposed such discriminatory treaties as the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty(CTBT) and has refused to give up its nuclear options until all countries in the world including nuclear weapon states embrace the idea of universal nuclear disarmament in a phased – manner.

- D. As a founder member of the United Nations, India has been firmly committed to the purposes' and principles of the United Nations and has made significant contributions to its various activities, including peace-keeping operations. India has been a participant in all its peace-keeping operations including those in Korea, Egypt and Congo and more recently in Somalia, Angola and Rwanda. India has also played an active role in the deliberations of the United Nations on the creation of a more equitable international economic order. At India' instance, the UN general Assembly adopted in 1974 the resolution for the establishment of New International Economic Order (NIEO). It has been an active member of the Group of 77, and later the core member group of the G-15 nations. India was elected for the record seventh time as a non-permanent member of Security Council in 2010 by the huge margin of support. India's two year term started on 1 Jan, 2011. India, due her size population, economic growth, leading role in world affairs and contribution to UN has advanced her claim for the permanent membership of the Security

Council. All the permanent members, except China have openly supported India's claim. India has also played responsible role with respect to other issues of UN such as environmentally sustainable development, protection of human rights, and disarmament at various international forums.

- E. India has succeeded in establishing a network of mutually beneficial relations with all Countries of the world to promote her vital national interests. Except with Pakistan, India's relations with her neighbours are improving. India launched a new Neighborhood Policy in 2005, which laid emphasis on developing connectivity and people to people contact with these countries. Before that, the Gujral Doctrine, 1998 postulated that India should not insist on reciprocity in developing her relations with her neighbouring countries. Indo-China relations are also passing through the normalization phase.
- F. One of the significant aspects of success of India' Policy in post-1990 period has been the development of strategic relations with the US. The Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation agreement signed in 2008, between the two countries is land-mark in bilateral relations. It ended India's 34 years nuclear isolation in world and recognized indirectly India as a nuclear power. India has put in place new mechanism of annual Summit meeting with many leading partners like China, Japan, Russia, ASEAN and the European Union. This has facilitated high level exchanges with these partners on regular basis.

- G. In addition, India has renewed its engagement with African countries under the framework of India-Africa Forum Summit, convened first time in 2008 and again in 2011. India has also initiated close interaction with the countries of Central Asia. This region is rich in energy resources and may prove beneficial to India for her energy security.
- H. An important achievement of India's foreign policy has been the promotion of regional cooperation in south Asia. India is an active member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which was launched in December 1985. With India's active involvement and in spite of many hurdles, SAARC took a historical decision to establish South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), which has come into force in 2006. For strengthening regional cooperation in her neighbourhood, India played a leading role in the establishment of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC) in March 1997, and BIMSTEC in 1998. At present, India's 'Look East Policy' has achieved noteworthy success. India has become member of ASEAN Regional Forum, in 1996 and since 2005, she is playing active role in the East Asia Summit, which aims to establish East Asia Community on the pattern of European Community.
- I. India has emerged as a leading player in global affairs. India is a founder member of G-20, which was established on the eve of global financial crisis, 1997 for the management of global financial order. India has been invited to become as a part of Outreach group of G8, which is considered as the rich countries club. She is also the member of IBSA, a trilateral group of three large developing countries from three continents-India, Brazil, and South Africa which was established in 2003. Similarly, India has also joined BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) 'which was founded in 2008 and is considered the group of emerging economies.
- J. Economic diplomacy has been a core element of India's foreign policy in last 20 years or so. India responded to globalization by domestic economic and institutional reforms. India set up Investment Publicity Unit (IPU) in 1990 with a view to disseminating economic information and coordinating the economic and commercial activities of foreign ministry India's Look East Policy has a major economic component. India has signed Free Trade Agreement with ASEAN in 2010.

### **Major findings and result:**

India is being considered as a major player in international arena. The problems of global commons like spread of COVID-19, climate change, terrorism and protection of human rights can not be addressed without the participation of India.

### **Major implications:**

- To maintain peace along international borders
- To balance relations with major global powers like USA and Russia and energy security

**Conclusion:**

Various influences are likely to affect India's journey to take the mantle of a major power in the future. Among them, the US and China might be the most influential factors at the Regional level (Indo-Pacific region).

Many Indian newspapers predicted that US President Trump would be likely to boost the India-US strategic relationship with special emphasis on defense ties and counter-terrorism cooperation.

Prime Minister Modi was the fifth world leader to speak with Trump both soon after the US Presidential election and also after the inauguration. Trump and Modi certainly have a common perception related to Israel and Islamic fundamentalism. Setting aside their personal predilections, no one knows for sure what will happen to India-US relations because of Trump's renowned unpredictability.

Modi's ascent to power constitutes a historic confluence of interests and opportunities. After the end of the Cold War, various models such as the Washington consensus, the Beijing consensus, and the Arab spring have been attempted without much success. Now India's attempt to develop as a major power under a liberal democratic setup might carry great historic significance.

In that sense, the country watching India's future with the greatest curiosity is likely to be China. India's success in achieving its ultimate aims would deal the strongest blow to China, which increasingly serves domestic demands for economic equality more than it meets mounting clamour for democratic rights.

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