



**International Conference – 2025: Developed India @ 2047**

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## **From Soft Tools to Smart Bonds: New India in the Globalized World-Vision 2047**

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### **Abstract**

India poised to become a global superpower by 2047, is transitioning from tools of diplomacy and economic policies to smart bonds that integrate technological advancements, financial strategies and geopolitical influence. This paper highlights initiatives like Digital India, UPI, Make in India and strategic alliances such as QUAD and BRICS+. By analysing economic growth, defence, modernization, energy security and social development, this study presents a comprehensive road map for India's vision

**Keywords:** smart power, geopolitical, Digital India, UPI, Make in India, Strategic Alliances, QUAD, BRICS+, Energy Security, IMEC, SAGAR

### **Introduction:**

As India approaches its centenary of independence in 2047, its aspirations align with becoming a developed nation, a global economic power house, and a leader in innovation. Cultural diplomacy is an important dimension of a country's soft power. The impact of India's soft power felt long before it was popularised in the 21st century. Indian arts, culture and spiritualism have attracted people from all over the world for centuries. This paper examines how India is evolving from traditional Soft Power Tools such as diplomacy, culture and services to "Smart Bonds" and hence a smart power which encompass economic resilience, technological advancements and strategic international partnerships.

The concept of 'Smart Power' was introduced by Joseph Nye, an American political scientist born on 19th January 1937 gained momentum during Clinton and Obama Administration. The term Smart Power refers to a combination of Hard and Soft powers to achieve diplomatic goals. Under Prime Minister Modi the new philosophical core of India's Foreign Policy can be defined as the "Panchamrit Policy," the five pillars of which are- Samman or Dignity, Samvad or Dialogue, Samriddhi or Prosperity, Suraksha or Security, and Sanskriti which is Cultural Linkages.

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India Vision 2047 aims to achieve dollar 30 trillion economy, Technological Supremacy in AI, Quantum Computing, Space Exploration, Net Zero Carbon Emission by 2070, Defence and Cyber Security Advancements, Social Economic Upliftment through Smart Governance and Digital Empowerment.

**From Soft Tools to Smart Bonds: The Paradigm Shift:**

Historically India has practiced soft power tools since ancient times. In ancient India, soft power tools like cultural exchange, religious diplomacy and philosophical ideas were used to exert influence and build relationships with other civilizations. Cultural exchange and spread of Buddhism, Ashoka's Dharm Sravana to promote peace, tolerance and nonviolence were a form of soft power usage. From Swami Vivekananda's visit to Chicago Parliament to diplomatic influence through organisations like NAM and SAARC, from cultural diplomacy like Bollywood, yoga and Ayurveda to service based economy where IT and BPO sectors are making India the "back office of the world", India has come a long way.

**Smart Bonds: The Future of India's Global Engagement and Key Pillars of India's Vision 2047:**

- **Digital Revolution and Financial Inclusion:**

India's fintech advancements are setting Global benchmarks. Initiatives like UPI (Unified Payments Interface), RuPay and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) showcase India's digital financial leadership. By 2047 India aims to integrate block chain and AI-driven finance into the global economy like the UPI expansion which has already been adopted in UAE, France and Singapore. UPI has the potential to become a global standard for digital payments.

Through initiative like 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' policy, India has promoted self-reliance and foreign direct investment (FDI). The signing trade agreements such as India-UAE, Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) are few such milestones. In January 2025 India and UK relaunched negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) fostering economic policies. Moreover India- Middle East- Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) proposed during G20 summit in September 2023, enhanced economic connectivity between the trios.

- **Manufacturing Innovation and Industrial Growth:**

The make in India 2.0 and production linked incentives schemes focus on making India a manufacturing hub for electronics semiconductors and EVs. For example-Apple and Tesla's India manufacturing plans are such examples which show major global firms shifting production to India signalling India's potential as the next China in manufacturing.

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India's energy diplomacy has significant advancements. India's commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2070 is backed by its leadership in solar energy, green hydrogen and electric mobility. For example, international solar alliance (ISA) is one such initiative of India to lead global solar energy development with 120 member countries. The Tata group is already working on the green hydrogen energy resources and heavy transport on trial basis.

In November 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Guyana led to agreement focusing on energy cooperation, particularly in oil and gas exploration has strengthened its energy security. Domestically also India's commitment to renewable energy has positioned it among the global clean energy leaders. By the end of 2024 India installed renewable energy capacity surpassed 200 gigawatts with projections indicating a doubling of investments to over dollar 32 billion in 2025.

**• Defence and Cyber Security Modernization:**

With growing geopolitical tensions, India is investing heavily in indigenous defence production and AI powered military technology. The Agnipath Scheme and S-400 missile system acquisitions showcase India's defence preparedness. For example, indigenous defence products like Tejas Fighter Jets and BrahMos Missiles and Transport Aircrafts are being exported to South East Asian and Middle Eastern Nations. India has strengthened its defence diplomacy through strategic alliances and military cooperation. It has engaged in joint military exercises, defence agreements and partnerships with major global powers including US, Russia and France. The Indo-US partnership reached new heights with Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA). And the purchase of MQ-9B Drones enhanced India's surveillance capabilities. The Union Budget for 2025-2026 allotted significant funds to the India AI Mission emphasizing the integration of artificial intelligence across sectors such as healthcare, education and Governance. This investment aims to enhance public service delivery and position India as a Leader in AI on the Global Stage.

**• Global Diplomacy and Strategic Alliances:**

India has the fastest growing diplomatic network of any country since 2021. India's diplomatic footprint is in every country in Asia, Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean Region. India pursues several foreign policies to widen its global influence but has focused heavily on 'Neighbourhood First Policy,' 'Act East Policy', 'Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)' to ensure security of its global interests.

The 'Neighbourhood First Policy' guides India's approach towards the management of relations with countries in its immediate neighbourhood that is that is Afghanistan Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

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The 'Act East Policy' emphasises proactive and pragmatic focus on the extended neighbourhood in the Indo Pacific Region. The objective is to promote economic cooperation, cultural and developing ties and developing strategic relationships with countries in the Indo Pacific Region, all while keeping China's ambitions under watch. India is strengthening its position in global geopolitics through QUAD, BRICS+ and G20 leadership.

**QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) and India's Role:**

India is strengthening its position in global geopolitics through QUAD (India, America, Japan, Australia) which aims at ensuring a free open and rule-based Indo Pacific strategic alliance. Initially conceptualized as a response to humanitarian crisis (2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami), it evolved into a security and economic partnership countering China's aggressive expansionism.

As far as India's contribution to QUAD is concerned, India participated in Malabar Naval exercise with QUAD members strengthening maritime security. India actively supports freedom of navigation and antipiracy operations in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean. India is also collaborating on critical technologies, semiconductors and cyber security with QUAD nations to reduce dependence on China. Amongst the recent developments (2023-2025) QUAD pledged to develop resilient global supply chains reducing dependence on China. India advocated for climate resilient measures leading the Indo Pacific oceans initiative and also pushed for QUAD'S expansion into economic and infrastructure development providing an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

In the light of the above facts, it can be said that India has never got into military alliances in fact QUAD is also not a military alliance.

**BRICS and India's Role in Multilateralism:**

BRICS (Brazil, Russia India China and South Africa) serve as a counterbalance to Western dominated financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank. India is a founding member and plays a crucial role in driving trade, investment and sustainable development.

- **New Development Bank (NDB):** India is a major contributor to New Development Bank which funds infrastructure projects in Developing Nations.
- **De Dollarization Efforts:** BRICS is working towards reducing reliance on the US dollar in trade with India promoting a rupee-based trade mechanism with Russia and other members.
- **Tech and Energy Cooperation:** India pushes for digital and energy collaboration advocating for renewable energy investments and AI innovation.
- **BRICS Expansion (2023-2025):** In 2023, BRICS announced six new members (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Iran, Argentina and Ethiopia) increasing its global economic footprint.

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India Supported expansion but emphasized a merit-based selection to prevent China from dominating the block. Tensions persist between India and China within BRICS, especially over border disputes yet India continues to leverage BRICS for its economic and diplomatic advantage.

**G20 Summit 2023 (New Delhi) India's Leadership Moment:**

India hosted the G20 summit 2023 in New Delhi under the theme "One Earth, One Family, One Future," focusing on:-

- Sustainable Development goals (SDGs) acceleration
- Climate Change and Green Finance
- Global Debt Resolution for Developing Countries
- Digital Transformation and AI Governance.

**Major Achievements**

- **India- Middle East- Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC):** Announced as a rival to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), connecting India, Middle East and Europe through rail and sea networks, and also towards enhancing energy security, trade and digital connectivity across continents.

- **African Union's Inclusion in G20**

India successfully pushed for the African Union (AU) to become a permanent member, enhancing representation of the Global South.

- **G20 Digital Public Infrastructure Framework:** India showcased its success with UPI Aadhaar and digital banking proposing a global model for financial inclusion.
- **Climate Finance Commitment:** India advocated for dollar 100 billion in Climate Financing pushing Wealthier Nations to support Green Transitions in the Global South.
- **Geopolitical Balancing Act:** The biggest challenge which arises before India as a Soft cum Smart Power is in times of War when the whole world is undergoing the trauma aroused from different fronts whether the Ukrainian front, the Red Sea front the Iranian front, War in Ghaza, Taiwan and recently Invasion in Pakistan by its various Provinces. India needs to maintain a Sound Stand.

Despite tensions over Russia-Ukraine war, India ensured a consensus declaration focusing on peace rather than outright condemnation of Russia.

India's diplomatic manoeuvring reinforced its role as a bridge between West and the Global South.



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**Challenges and Road Ahead:**

- Economic Inequality: despite growth, income disparity remains a concern.
- Geopolitical Tensions: Border conflicts with China and tensions with Pakistan.
- Climate Change: balancing industrial growth with sustainability goals.
- Skill Development: preparing the workforce for AI, Automation and future jobs.
- India's Internal Challenges: like Economic Inequality, Cast, Religious Tensions and Political Shifts may affect Diplomacy.

**Vision 2047 Road Map:**

Policy Reforms: Strengthening ease of doing business, reducing bureaucracy.

Innovation Ecosystem: Encouraging Start-Ups, Deep Tech Research and AI development.

Human capital development: Investing in STEM education and skilling initiatives.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Aligning economic growth with environmental and social wellbeing.

**Conclusion:**

The very concept of Development of Lucian Pye which says “economic development as the prerequisite of political development” seems to be embedded in the very philosophy of ‘New India’. Balancing Economic Cooperation with BRICS India has positioned itself as a key global actor. Its ability to navigate between powers like US, China and Russia- demonstrate its Smart Power diplomacy, blending economic, strategic and soft power to influence global governance.

Today the ‘Content’ of Modi Era has changed its Diaspora from ‘Soft Power’ to ‘Smart Power’ and ‘Panchamrit Policy’ where India is seen as a Civilized State, which is focusing on ‘People’s Presidency’. It has learnt from its past moves like -Vajpayee’s policy of soft power in Pakistan, which failed, because of position of Pakistan Army. Similarly, ‘Hard’ issues like war in Myanmar have led to the collapse of Free Movement Regime (FMR) and now we have a fence.

So keeping in view the past, it can be said that hard power restricts movements....“Capital moves, but it does not allows the people to move.”

Therefore, there is a shift in paradigm where it is felt that “Soft Power should breed Familiarity and not Inferiority.”

In the last ten years, the symbol which has excelled is, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has rewritten the entire content of Foreign Policy of India under the Umbrella of ‘Smart Power’ whether it is the concept of ‘Bharat’ ‘RAM-Rajya’, ‘Branding India’ with events and practices the whole Diaspora has taken ‘New Feel and Zeal’.





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Recently, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025 spoke about Ukraine War, Donald Trump, China ties and much more in conversation with American podcaster Lex Friedman. The important issues which show Modi as Statesmen are:

PM Modi Wants a Reset With China, he pointed out both traditional and contemporary equations, “If you look back centuries, there is no history of conflict between India and China. Differences are natural, but our focus is to ensure that these differences don't turn into disputes. Since the 21st Century is ‘Asia’s century,’ We want India and China to compete in a natural way”. The Foreign Ministry of China has also noticed it and have welcomed Modi’s remarks.

On Russia, Ukraine matter Prime Minister Modi is hopeful of peace. He said regardless of how many people stand with you in the world, there will never be a resolution in the battlefield. Ukraine may hold countless discussions with their allies but it will bear no fruit.

Criticisms of Global Institutions: International Organisations that have evolved after World Wars like the United Nations have become irrelevant. They failed to evolve with time and this inability to adapt has sparked a global debate on their relevance. United Nations has failed to stop conflicts, World Trade Organisation (WTO) has failed to stop Tariff Wars and that is why India is pushing for Reforms.

On the Matter of AI: It was asked whether AI can replace humans. Prime Minister Modi said, “I firmly believe that no technology can ever replace the boundless creativity and imagination of the human mind. Humans have an innate ability to care for each other, the natural tendency to be concerned about one another. And AI is not capable of that. Hence there was a strong vote for human creativity.

In the closing remarks what can be said about India that is ‘Bharat’ is, that, it is somewhere between ‘Vishwa Guru’ and ‘Vishwa Maitri’. Vishwa Guru is one who can give thought direction and Vishwa Matri because what we did during COVID and earthquakes of Syria and Turkey in 2023.

Also, India is one of the largest ‘Functional Democracies’ of the World. Whereas most of the Post-Colonial Countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Indonesia don't have a functional democracy.

Hence by the closure of 2047 India will be a ‘Beacon Light’ of ‘Functional Democracy’ peace, Harmony, Universal Brotherhood and hence a ‘Vishwa Guru’.



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