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## Paradigm shift in international power politics

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### Abstract

India's rising global influence has been evident through its leadership in multiple international organisations such as the G20, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). These roles have allowed India to showcase its diplomatic prowess and address global issues. The Quad summit provided yet another opportunity for India to contribute to the development of a robust, cooperative international system. The discussions during the summit included the need to evolve a new strategic approach to counter threats from nations that seek to destabilise the global order. A key focus of the summit was the Indo-Pacific region, where the Quad aims to ensure a free, open, and secure maritime environment. This area has become a flashpoint for various conflicts, with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) posing a significant challenge to regional stability. To counter this, the Quad members have collaborated on several initiatives, including the "Quad-at-Sea" Ship Observer Mission, which will enhance maritime security by 2025. Moreover, the group is also investing in renewable energy and high-quality infrastructure projects in the Indo-Pacific, aiming to foster sustainable development and reduce reliance on Chinese-led initiatives. Health cooperation was another important topic at the summit, with the Quad leaders announcing a collaborative effort to combat cervical cancer through the Quad Cancer Moonshot initiative. This humanitarian approach, combined with the group's security efforts, underscores the Quad's commitment to a comprehensive vision for regional stability and prosperity. The focus on addressing modern terrorism, including its funding and cyber threats, also highlights the Quad's adaptive approach to emerging security challenges. The ongoing collaboration among the Quad nations is not limited to traditional security measures. The group is working to enhance policing cooperation, cyber security, and border protection by leveraging technological innovations. The efforts of India on multiple international forums such as G20, INTERPOL, SCO, BRICS have become particularly crucial in addressing non-state actors who engage in smuggling, drug trafficking, and cyber-attacks. By tightening security mechanisms and boosting intelligence-sharing, India will hopefully build a more resilient defense network across the Indo-Pacific in coming days. The research paper is an attempt to examine the nature of multiple problems the world encounters these days and how India has not only provided a solution to the problems but emerged as the key player in global politics.

**Keywords:** International relations, diplomacy, global south, soft power, Indian foreign policy, strategic affairs

### Introduction

The world is witnessing a tectonic shift in international power dynamics with the emergence of a new world order. Recent developments across the globe have highlighted the importance of addressing popular aspirations in order to pre-empt unrest or regime change. With the international arena undergoing unprecedented transformations, nations have been forced to seek collaborative strategies and solutions for security that go beyond the conventional. Multidimensional challenges such as terrorism, climate change, and rapid technological disruptions brought forth by the dynamic nature of international relations have necessitated a shared commitment from stakeholders worldwide. Recent agreements made between India and the US however seem to have shone light on the way forward through a collective approach based on sustained cooperation and mutual understanding. The success of these initiatives depends upon the willingness and ability of the participant countries to nurture a more holistic, global mindset and to forsake political rivalries in the interest of the common good. However, steering away from the temptations of power politics while upholding principles of justice, peace, and equality, is a responsibility that lies heavy with the nations of the world.

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It also requires concerted efforts towards the building of a harmonious world order, one where collaboration is pursued for the well-being of humanity over national interest. Towards these ends, the 19<sup>th</sup> Summit of the G20 held last year in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil can be seen as a landmark event on account of its contributions towards collectively raising the voice of the Global South. Apart from the 19-member nations of the G20, the Summit also had in attendance representatives from the European and African Unions, the latter having been included as the last permanent member during the prior Summit held in New Delhi. The 2024 Rio de Janeiro Summit, held amidst an uncertain political atmosphere on account of the West Asian crises and the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian conflict, would focus primarily on two pertinent issues *viz.* increasing economic disparities and environmental degradation, apart from questions of food security and poverty alleviation, all being of paramount concern for the development of a stable and peaceful world order. Formed in 1999 in the wake of the economic crisis of 1997, the Group of 20 was initially set up with the primary purpose of uplifting the then collapsing economics from impending doom. Since then, the G20 has only grown in scope and scale, with economic aggrandizement being the central point of discussion in all of its summits. Today, it stands as an amalgamation of some of the most powerful nations of the world such as the United States of America, France, China, India, Japan, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, to name a few, alongside some developing ones spread out across the globe. Making Spain a permanent invitee to the G20 and the recent inclusion of the European and African Unions as full members has only served to extend its scope and area of influence. The most recent summit of the G20 that took place in 2024 in Brazil holds significance on account of the Global South becoming more assertive of their fundamental objectives and demands, such as planning and strategies with a focus on green industry. With concerns being raised about the temperatures spiking across the globe, the member nations focused on initiatives towards sustainable development and the use of energy resources, along with discussions on certain novel issues like cultural contiguity. There has also been a growing demand for the reformation of the prime governing and monetary institutions of the world such as the World Bank, IMF, WTO, and the UNSC. The round of talks held at the 2024 G20 Summit can be seen as an indication of a shift in the position of the group towards building a more transparent and inclusive world system.

While on one hand, there are increasing demands for working towards a greener future, the fullest utilisation of modern technology in the economic sphere through initiatives such as building a digital economy remain crucial considerations in the drive towards upgrading from old to new. With rich and valuable experience in this sphere, India stands poised as an inspiration for many of the member nations of the G20. The remarkable progress of India's IT industry has opened fresh doors for many Indian companies who are now seeking to aggressively expand into markets overseas. This plunge into overseas markets has been backed by the country's compliance and regulatory authorities who have been thoroughly monitoring economic transactions, ensuring that the foreign investments remain doubly secure.

Despite challenges posed by a tough economic climate globally, India was able to position itself as a key player in

global manufacturing and a reliable partner in multiple sectors during its G20 Presidency in New Delhi in 2023. Many have attributed India's phenomenal growth to its visionary leadership, its immense talent pool, and incredible foresight. The role played by India in setting up of the International Solar Alliance, the Green Hydrogen Innovation Centre, One Sun One World One Grid, and the Global Biofuel Alliance along with waste-to-energy efforts has received much commendation from the G20 member nations. The prodigious efforts and achievements of India were brilliantly highlighted by Prime Minister Modi in his remarks at the New Delhi summit. He is, without a doubt, one of the most respected and popular leaders of world politics who has turned India into the leading voice of the Global South.

In its drive towards building a more inclusive global society, the group of 20 has allowed for the development of new strategies that are also focused on meeting the requirements of some of the vulnerable countries, relying on the growing trust and cooperation visible among its member nations. Such cooperation could very well propel a much needed positive shift in the international arena, fuelling greater harmony and collaboration. However, G20 members are themselves navigating numerous social and political pressures and their success also hangs largely on them being able to maintain growth and momentum back at home amidst multiple challenges. Addressing these social, cultural, economic, and political pangs could provide G20 with the opportunity to further solidify its position as a global economic powerhouse, one that is able to drive growth not only among member nations but also others. By encouraging diplomatic engagement and building robust conflict resolution mechanisms, it can promote international stability without compromising on the economic prosperity of its members. To this end, the group's shared vision would be vital in shaping a multi-layered, multilateral strategy for dealing with not only economic but also security challenges in an increasingly connected world.

The G20 has gradually expanded its scope to include critical areas such as disaster management, digital infrastructure, and climate change, making it a multifaceted initiative with dimensions of both security and development. However, the G20 also has the potential to become a platform for fostering development in fields as diverse as education, science, biotechnology, and strategic planning, further strengthening bonds between its member nations, and India has been playing the frontrunner's role in this regard backed by an extremely able leadership at the helm. It has made considerable strides in a number of areas, including in knowledge and skill-based intensive services, such as telecommunication, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and services such as those provided by doctors, teachers, and management professionals, to name a few.

In recent years, India seems to have even emerged as the prime choice for foreign investors who have been gradually pumping in a huge amount (more than \$60 billion) in the Indian stock markets. There are about 260 new foreign investors who have registered themselves with the Indian regulating body SEBI in the last couple of decades alone. In addition to this, as many as 600 new investors also received permissions to trade on the Indian stock exchanges, leading to monumental growths of 125 and 148 percent in the Sensex and Bombay Stock Exchange respectively. It could be possible to further enhance foreign investor sentiments

by granting permissible ease in tax rates and existing protocols without compromising on security essentials. Not only would this help save on paperwork, taxes, and time for the typical investor but it would also further assist their decision in choosing India as their preferred business destination.

The country has witnessed a start-up revolution in the past decade, with the number of start-ups having crossed the landmark of more than ten thousand in the previous five years alone. According to a recent report of NASSCOM, this robust strategy of supporting the growth of start-ups has led to the creation of more than one lakh direct and indirect jobs in India, providing a massive impetus to employment generation in the country. Through its policy focused on enhancing its operational and support network, across both rural and urban areas, India has been able to ensure a much higher rate of return on assets.

The transformative journey of India towards Viksit Bharat@2047 necessitates a holistic approach, emphasising a strong moral and ethical order alongside its efforts towards cultivating excellence in every field. The challenges posed by rapid changes that have occurred across the globe require proactive measures to bridge knowledge gaps and to foster interdisciplinary collaboration. It is imperative that we instil a sense of responsibility and cultivate creativity among our youth and students to enable them to address contemporary issues effectively. Efforts need to be focused towards integrating real-life experiences into the existing theoretical system so that we can foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Embracing diversity and inclusivity in the development process to enhance inclusive and balanced growth will only strengthen the fabric of society, effectively contributing to our national development goals. Moreover, initiatives such as mass media engagement and building a low-cost inner web of small scale industries have the potential to amplify the impact of our growth at the grassroots level, promoting social awareness and civic engagement among the youth. However, as we navigate through these complex socio-political landscapes embracing innovation and progress, it is also crucial that we do not do so at the cost of our traditional values of interconnectedness, cooperation, and empathy. By nurturing a generation equipped with moral clarity and practical skills, we will be able to pave the path for a brighter future for India and the world.

In essence, our journey towards Viksit Bharat@2047 has the potential to make India the leading voice of the Global South, and inevitably, the rest of the World. However, an epoch-making voyage of such proportions will require collective efforts from all sections of society, including from politicians, educators, youth, students, policymakers, and society at large. By prioritising ethical education, fostering interdisciplinary learning, and embracing diversity, we can build a strong foundation for the promising times that lie ahead. By championing the cause of inclusive diplomacy, we could shape a world that truly reflects Louis Armstrong's sentiment as expressed in his chartbuster single 'What a Wonderful World'. India's role as a mediator and proponent of cooperation will be instrumental in this collective journey towards a brighter future. As nations across the world navigate these complex times, it is shared commitment to a common destiny that will ultimately determine the course of international relations, ushering in an era of peace and prosperity. Let us embark on this

journey towards excellence together, guided by the principles of integrity, empathy, and resilience, and our belief in our age-old maxim of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', that the world is one family. (author, a recipient of Rashtriya and Bharat Gaurav awards is a professor and expert on strategic affairs).

### Conclusion

India has solidified its rising global influence through leadership in forums like the G20, SCO, and the Quad. The Quad, in particular, showcases India's commitment to a free and secure Indo-Pacific by enhancing maritime security, investing in sustainable infrastructure to counter China's BRI, and collaborating on health initiatives like the Cancer Moonshot. Overall, India is emerging as a key player in global politics, offering solutions to complex challenges and working with international partners on security, development, and humanitarian issues, guided by a vision of collective prosperity.

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