

# India - A Super Power in Making

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"India is not just a piece of earth; she is power, a Godhead". This is how Sri Aurobindo looked at this country and its rich ancient civilisation. But all that he wanted fellow Indians to have was "the firm faith that India must rise and be great."

The nationhood which India acquired in the 20th Century, fulfilling the dreams of Asoka, Akbar and Gandhi, has now brought it to the threshold of Great Power status at the beginning of the 21st. It is now widely accepted that the new century will be an Asian one. The US may still be a super-power in its early decades, carrying on from the New World the supremacy which old European powers have lost. But the future beckons India.

## **What Makes a Nation Super-Power ?**

To be a super power a country must

- (a) have a sizeable but manageable population (barring perhaps china);
- (b) be endowed with unity, political cohesion and stability;
- (c) have structured its national economic orders which are efficient, competitive and productive;
- (d) have trained manpower resources and high levels of technological capacities;
- (e) have high levels of defence and military capacities including nuclear weapons;

- (f) preferably be a democracy.

## **Can India be a Super-Power ?**

Keeping these benchmarks in view, is India capable of a great power status in the 21st century ?

We gave unto ourselves a democratic Constitution, extolled as one of the best by many world statesmen. It has stood the test of nearly 55 tumultuous years. Our democracy, our thriving free media, our contentious NGOs, our energetic human rights groups, and the repeated spectacle of our remarkable general elections have all made India a rare example of the successful management of diversity in the developing world. Let us not forget that several nations of South East Asia and Africa, which got freedom almost alongwith us, have strayed away from democracy and have suffered long years of more ruthless native despotic rule in place of foreign despotic rule.

India is among the first 15 economic powers of the world. We have travelled a long way from the pitiable predicament of having to live "from ship to mouth" and attained comfortable self-sufficiency in food. After a decade of economic reforms India has emerged as an economic superpower in the making. India's Gross National Income, on purchasing power parity basis, was \$ 2375 billion in 2000. This makes India the fourth largest economy in the world after the United States, China and

Japan. The great Indian middle class is currently over 250 million that beckons investors and exporters. We have made a dent in Information Technology. We have largest number of trained scientists in the world. India's foreign exchanges reserve has risen from a barely \$ 1 billion to over \$129 billion.

India has the fourth largest army in the world and is among the seven or eight countries which have confirmed capacities in nuclear technology, space technology etc. Of late, India has also begun to commercialise indigenously developed satellites, defence equipments and peaceful nuclear products and technologies, which is a distinct imitation of superpower syndrome.

But, what is India's most significant achievement ? It may well be the triumph of multiculturalism. India with its unbelievable 4,635 communities and 325 languages has not only happily survived but continues to derive immense pride from the fact of this wonderful diversity enriching its culture. This civilisational ethos has been an immeasurable asset for our country.

### **Factors Against India**

The factors which can prevent us from becoming an important power are :

- (a) ineffective population control programmes;
- (b) high levels of illiteracy;
- (c) poor quality of national politics;
- (d) our economy, despite reforms, is not efficient or productive, and does not ensure distributive justice for our vast population;
- (e) lack of scientific temper;
- (f) we still do not produce nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers etc.
- (g) we still have to plan a pattern of strategic equations with other power centers of the World. We have to resolve our problems with

our neighbours, only then we can move effectively on to the international stage.

As of now, India is still far from the status of superpowerdom. At present we are considered as a regional power. We are confined largely to the South Asian region, and may be South-East Asian region. Undoubtedly, serious deficiencies have remained; fresh weaknesses have emerged; new dangers have arisen. Still, it would be wrong not to acknowledge that India has made substantial all round progress; its achievements in the last fifty-eight years have been considerable by any historical standards, especially if we keep in view the level from which it started and 'how difficult was the terrain along which we had to tread.'

### **How can India be a Global Powerhouse ?**

India can be an influential power provided :

- (a) We consolidate our national unity and ensure political stability;
- (b) we undertake a positive programme of public health and public education;
- (c) we vigorously pursue the objective of economic reforms and modernisation;
- (d) we undertake programme to enhance our scientific and technological capacities on a continuous basis;
- (e) we do not succumb to international pressure and do not in any way reduce our defence, nuclear and missile capacities;
- (f) we concentrate our efforts to establish a co-operative and working relationship with all our neighbours.

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